Marianne Leslie

THE HISTORY OF PORTIA.

WRITTEN by a LADY.

What's female beauty but an air divine,
Through which the mind's all gentle graces shine?
These, like the sun, irradiate all between;
The body charms because the soul is seen:
Hence men are often captives of a face,
They know not why, of no peculiar grace.
Some forms, though bright, no mortal man can bear;
Some none resist, though not exceeding fair.

Dr. Young's Univers. Pass.

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MDCCLIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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THE HISTORY OF *PORTIA.*

CHAP. I.

The ſtory of Portia continued.

WHEN this ſubject came firſt under my conſideration, among the many circumſtances of advantage which, in my opinion, reſulted evidently from a diligent uſe of it, there were none that engaged my attention ſo cloſely, as the happineſs my fair countrywomen were by this means likely to derive from the conjugal ſtate; in regard to which, all the reſt may be eſteemed as little more than a kind of prelude, conſiſting however of a great variety of parts, that ought to be played over with the ut-

moſt care and exactneſs, by way of tuning the ſeveral inſtruments, in order to their producing that harmony and delight which is always to be expected from a good concert; but, on the contrary, ſhould this precaution be at any time neglected, the whole operation to an intelligent ear, muſt conſequently ſound little leſs frightful than the hideous, diſcordant yell of cats and dogs.

Matrimonial happineſs then, on the part of the women at leaſt, may, I think, be very juſtly conſidered as the propereſt touchſtone to try the intrinſick excellence of this my ſpecifick; I ſay, particularly on the part of the women, becauſe the pureſt gold may ſometimes be, as I am afraid it too often is, ſhamefully adulterated by the mixture of baſer metal, and its properties, during ſuch an heterogeneous conjunction, may evidently appear ſo far injured, as to render it, upon trial, greatly inadequate to the true ſtandard; it muſt be confeſſed, indeed, that the diſcipline of the crucible can perfectly reſtore all its native beauty and value again, but this generally proves a diſagreeable experiment, and therefore the uſe of my coſmetick, if early and judiciouſly applied, may, in a great meaſure, prevent all the trouble and difficulty of ſuch a proceſs.

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In ſhort, to drop the alluſion here, that ſyſtem of female education, which impreſſes the principles of virtue deeply on the heart, by convincing the underſtanding, at the ſame time both of their neceſſity and utility, bids certainly the faireſt for obtaining ſuch a prize, in what however is too unjuſtly called the lottery of wedlock, as is moſt likely to inſure the happineſs abovementioned: but even this rule, ſucceſsful as it may prove in general, cannot always be depended upon as infallible; ſince it is ſcarcely poſſible for us to be thoroughly aſſured, otherwiſe than perhaps by woeful experience, that the virtue of the men, I mean the rectitude of their conduct in quality of huſbands, is not altogether, as it ought to be, in exact proportion to the goodneſs of their underſtanding: the uncertainty in this caſe, it muſt be allowed, is ſometimes the cauſe of much infelicity to women of the greateſt merit, in their choice of partners for life; and ſuch indeed it proved in an extraordinary degree to the deſerving Portia, whoſe ſtory I entered upon in the laſt chapter; but then it muſt likewiſe be allowed, that had this not been the caſe, her virtues, which, I believe, were as numerous and ſhining as ever yet adorned the female breaſt, could not how-

ever had an opportunity of appearing otherwiſe to ſo great advantage; for bright as the luſtre of the fineſt brilliant may be, 'tis nevertheleſs ſuppoſed to be heightened ſtill by the addition of a foil.

This advantage at leaſt we women have certainly over the men, that their miſconduct, whether in the capacity of lovers or huſbands, though it can by no means countenance, much leſs juſtify ours, muſt however, by way of conſolation, be always conſidered as an additional enſign in the triumph of our virtues; and yet the enjoyment of ſuch a triumph, flattering as it may ſeem in ſpeculation, is what very few of us, I believe, would originally chuſe to ſtipulate for, in preference to that of endeavouring to conſtitute their happineſs jointly with our own: that we are not more generally ſucceſsful in thoſe our endeavours, is, as I have before remarked, owing, in a very great meaſure, to a wrong biaſs in our education, but not always to this alone, for it will appear from the whole detail of Portia's ſtory, both as maid, and wife, that it is in truth owing ſometimes likewiſe to the want of more honour, more tenderneſs, and a juſter ſenſe of their true intereſt, in the men, as well in the character of lovers, as huſbands.

When once a gentleman, by the particularity of his behaviour, and great aſſiduity, has given the ſtrongeſt proofs of his attachment to the fair one whom he addreſſes, if ſhe be a woman of ſtrict virtue and honour, and he ſo fortunate as to engage her affection with the approbation of her friends, he ought by all means to be as perfectly explicit in the declaration of his paſſion, as he ought to be ſteady in preſerving the high opinion of her that firſt inſpired it, ſuch a prize being well worth all his pains; he is in truth under a double obligation on this account, and ſuch as I ſhould think, muſt by every man of true ſpirit and good underſtanding be always held indiſpenſible; the happineſs, no leſs than the reputation of one, if not of both the parties, may here be very deeply concerned, inſomuch, that the man, who is capable of receding precipitately from ſuch an engagement, or of trifling in ſo delicate a conjuncture, except he has the moſt unqueſtionable motives to juſtify his conduct, if he be not abſolutely a knave, muſt at leaſt be the dupe of his own credulity, and may, in either caſe, prove the inſtrument of much real affliction to a woman, perhaps of the greateſt merit.

That Machaon's behaviour to the amiable Portia, rendered him juſtly liable to the imputation of one of theſe characters, will, I think, appear very evidently in the ſequel of this little hiſtory; and yet, among the whole ſex, he could hardly have fixed upon one, who leſs deſerved ſuch treatment than herſelf: how great the anguiſh ſhe felt, on being informed, though in the gentleſt manner, of his indiſpoſition, thoſe of my fair readers may moſt eaſily conceive, whoſe hearts have been at any time involved in the ſame tender ſituation with her own; and that this too frequently happens to be the caſe, is, however, I believe, not always more attributable, in point of ſtrict juſtice, to female weakneſs and indiſcretion, though always placed to that account, than it is to perfidy, caprice, folly, or a miſtaken cauſe of triumph in male creatures; but be this as it will, Portia had been fondly amuſing herſelf with the agreeable proſpect of her approaching change of condition, and in ſtudying how ſhe might moſt ſucceſsfully merit and reward the affection of him, whom ſhe now conſidered as the chief author of her higheſt felicity or miſery in this world, when Lucia and Tradewell communicated the ungrateful tidings to her in the manner that had been previouſly

viouſly concerted between them; ſurprize at ſo ſudden an unexpected an event ſeemed for a while to ſuſpend the very powers of ſenſation, and obſtinately to ſuppreſs all utterance of grief; but a torrent of diſmal, yet friendly tears, ſoon brought her ſome relief, if that indeed could properly be called relief, that only ſerved to heighten the ſenſibility of her woe: imagination, that aſſiduous friend, or enemy to mankind, always in extremes, proved now in a very high degree the latter to the wretched Portia, and terrified her with the apprehenſion, that things muſt be infinitely more dreadful than they had been repreſented by her friends; ſhe therefore begged to be minutely informed of all the particulars relating to Machaon's illneſs, and as ſoon as they had given her ſuch an account as they judged moſt proper, ſhe earneſtly entreated her mother and brother, that ſhe might be inſtantly conducted by them to his houſe; that it was but a ſmall proof of the affection he deſerved from her, and might prove an additional means of endearing her ſtill the more to him; that as their union had been ſo near, the making any ſacrifices to her delicacy at this time, by being obliged to abſent herſelf from him on ſo intereſting an occaſion, was downright affectation and im-

pertinence, and would only prove a cruel aggravation of her torment.

But ſtill her friends had too weighty reaſons not to diſſuade her from inſiſting upon this requeſt, which however they could not as yet venture to reveal to her; they therefore aſſured her, that his phyſicians had abſolutely forbid it, from their apprehenſions that her appearance would inevitably occaſion ſuch agitations in the patient, as might be productive of fatal conſequences, perhaps to both; ſo that in this perplexed ſituation ſhe was obliged to acquieſce for the preſent, far as it was from adminiſtering ſuch relief as the dreadful anxiety and perturbation of her mind required; for beſides the peculiar conſideration of Machaon's being immediately the object of her own free choice, he had, as I obſerved before, been ſtrenuouſly recommended by her mother, and all the reſt of her friends, inſomuch, that it could by no means be thought a weakneſs in her to cheriſh a paſſion for a man of his approved merit, with all the ardour, yet with all the purity, that love and virtue could ſuggeſt; and indeed, ſo long as ſhe had the leaſt reaſon to believe him ſincere, though unfortunate, ſhe wavered not a ſingle moment in her affection for him.

Tradewell, it muſt be remembered, omitted not to reviſit his friend Machaon on the evening of the ſame day, in which he had been ſo dangerouſly wounded, in hopes of being able to learn, from his own mouth, a more explicit account of his extraordinary adventure, than he had in the morning from his phyſicians and domeſticks; but ſo far was he from being indulged in this favour, that he was poſitively refuſed admiſſion into the houſe, and obliged to return home without receiving any further ſatisfaction, in regard to his friend's health, than that he was ſo extremely ill, that he ſaw no company; this at firſt very ſenſibly alarmed and chagrined Tradewell, as there had been a long intimacy ſubſiſting between them; but upon reflection, it only helped to ſtrengthen the probability of his former conjecture, that his diſorder muſt be that of madneſs, which had thus induced his relations, and the people about him to act with ſuch extraordinary caution and reſerve towards an old friend: however, it was his opinion, as well as Lucia's, that even the ſmalleſt hint of this conjecture ſhould, on no account, be as yet communicated to Portia, the preſent ſtate of her health and ſpirits viſibly requiring the utmoſt aid that lenitives of every kind, not

corroſives, could poſſibly afford; ſhe was accordingly informed by her brother, tho ſomewhat evaſively, that Machaon, to all appearance, was not worſe; that his fever was not as yet advanced to the criſis, and that his phyſicians could undertake to pronounce nothing with certainty, till that event ſhould be known; but that in the mean time they acted with ſo much tenderneſs and precaution, as to diſſuade all his friends from deſiring to ſee him.

This indeed afforded but very little, if any conſolation at all to the highly afflicted Portia; but her friends were, for her ſake, under the ſevere neceſſity of being obliged to temporize with her a little longer: her brother ſent the next morning, as he did likewiſe for ſeveral ſucceeding ones, to enquire after the health of his friend, but received no other information from thence, than that Machaon had lately given poſitive orders to his ſervants that they ſhould take in no more meſſages, or deliver any anſwers concerning him; yet Tradewell was far from being irritated at this, as an offence particularly levelled at him and his family, againſt whom, by the way, it was in truth alone intended, though they were at that time as entirely ignorant thereof, as they were wholly unconſcious of having deſerved

ſuch

ſuch treatment; it therefore only diſpoſed him the more ſincerely to commiſerate the ſad misfortune of his friend: however, a few days more had elapſed, when Tradewell was informed by ſome of his own ſervants, that Machaon muſt certainly be gone out of town, as his houſe was now quite ſhut up, and ſo indeed it prov'd; but though this account had all the appearance of corroborating ſtill his firſt opinion, and conſequently that Machaon might, in all probability, be carried to ſome private mad-houſe out of town, both Lucia and he were nevertheleſs exceſſively embarraſſed at this ſeemingly myſterious behaviour; and therefore, from the palpable contempt that had been ſhewn to their anxiety, and to all their civilities, (to ſay nothing of the engagements that were ſubſiſting) they determined, let the motive of his conduct be what it would, to keep the unhappy, but innocent Portia no longer in the agonies of ſuſpence, but to diſcloſe to her by gentle degrees, as much of this extraordinary procedure as they had hitherto from circumſtances been able to penetrate; not that their reſentment or cenſure fell ſo immediately heavy upon Machaon himſelf, whom they ſtill ſuppoſed to be in this deplorable diſorder, as upon thoſe of his

friends, who had been principally inſtrumental in bringing about this match, and had likewiſe, no doubt, a principal ſhare in the late ſcene of rudeneſs and neglect with which they had all been treated.

Upon opening the affair therefore to Portia, with all the tender concern which the fondeſt parent and moſt affectionate brother could expreſs, ſhe ſeemed inclined at firſt to treat it merely as a fineſſe, or an expedient uſed by her friends to palliate either the ſudden death, or infidelity of her lover; but upon their ſolemn aſſurance of the contrary, and upon giving her ſtill a more minute account of every circumſtance they had been able to diſcover, in relation to the nature of Machaon's illneſs, ſhe became indeed almoſt diſtracted, and ſeemed, for the preſent, to be in ſcarcely a leſs wretched condition than himſelf; but when a ſufficient interval of time had in ſome meaſure recompoſed her agitated ſpirits, ſhe could by no means be induced to give abſolute credit to the conjecture of his being ſo ſuddenly ſeized with madneſs, eſpecially as her brother, who had now been intimately acquainted with him for many years, had never once obſerved in him the leaſt tendency towards a diſorder of this kind, nor had ever heard of its being in his family:

family: there was one particular indeed, which, above all others, had made the deepeſt impreſſion upon her, and that was the exclamation which Machaon had uttered, in relation to her having deceived both him and her brother, the morning in which the latter had viſited him when he was firſt wounded; this, ſhe thought, contained ſomething too myſterious for her to unravel, and yet ſomething too important to her peace not to attract her utmoſt attention; but all her ſagacity, had it been much greater, might very well have failed her in the ſolution of this enigma, ſince the conſciouſneſs of her own innocence had rendered her wholly inacceſſible to the guilt of ſuch a charge; however, ſhe was for ſome time obliged to ſubmit to the opinion of her friends, though more from her reſpect for their authority and affection, than from an entire conviction in regard to the probability of the fact.

During this interval, ſhe endeavoured to conſole herſelf in the beſt manner ſhe could; the aids of reaſon and religion, as they were her firſt, ſo did they in the end prove her infallible reſource; ſhe conſidered, if the caſe ſhould be in reality what her friends had ſtrongly apprehended it, that ſhe was then under the higheſt obliga-

obligations to be particularly thankful to providence, that had thus brought her ſo ſignal, and ſo ſeaſonable a deliverance, before the irrevocable fiat had been pronounced, that muſt for ever have united her to Machaon; ſhe had always looked upon the deprivation of reaſon as the heavieſt misfortune that could befal the perſon ſo afflicted, and indeed, as the moſt mortifying ſpectacle that could poſſibly be exhibited to the view of mankind; her own family, ſhe knew, had hitherto been entirely free from all hereditary diſorders whatſoever, and ſhe could not help thinking it a peculiar bleſſing, even in the midſt of this ſcene of her affliction, to be at any rate prevented from becoming the unhappy inſtrument of entailing upon poſterity ſo dreadful a malady as that of madneſs; and, on the other hand, ſhould the caſe be otherwiſe than as her friends had apprehended, yet the unaccountableneſs of Machaon's behaviour towards her, his abſence from, and total neglect of her, and all her family for the ſpace of many weeks, without ſo much as attempting an apology, could not but fill her with ſuch uneaſy apprehenſions, as muſt neceſſarily excite her reſentment, in the ſame degree that it alarmed her affection,

conſidering the critical ſituation in which they had lately been engaged.

Having therefore brought herſelf by degrees to conſider this affair, on both ſides, in the light wherein I have now repreſented it, ſhe at length appeared ſomewhat more tranquil and compoſed, tho' ſtill very deeply dejected; but the great docility of her own diſpoſition co-operated effectually on this occaſion, with the excellent education ſhe had received, that had early and faithfully inſtructed her how to make every tumultuous, and every diſorderly paſſion wiſely ſubſervient to the diſcipline of reaſon: this conflict, however, was ſo manifeſtly at the expence of her health and peace of mind, that, a change of air being thought abſolutely neceſſary, ſhe retired for the preſent with her mother into the country, where ſhe remained till time and proper aſſiſtance had at leaſt reſtored her health of body, and in a great meaſure likewiſe re-inſtated her in the accuſtomed chearfulneſs of her diſpoſition; but what contributed moſt eſſentially to facilitate the latter was, as I hinted before, the contempt which naturally aroſe from her own reflections, on the flagrant ingratitude and incivility of Machaon, from whom they had not heard a ſingle ſyllable ſince the firſt mo-

ment

ment of his being taken ill; there ſeemed indeed to be as yet a poſſibility that he was not altogether in fault, and that his behaviour might perhaps be placed, in part at leaſt, to the account of his relations and friends; and this bare poſſibility the faithful, the affectionate Portia would often endeavour to improve into the higheſt degree of probability; but then, ſuppoſing him not to be in the unhappy diſorder which was at firſt conjectured, when ſhe conſidered, in that caſe, how intirely he was maſter of his own conduct, and yet how ſtrongly appearances were againſt him, ſhe could not, conſiſtently with prudence or ſelf-love, retain one mitigating ſentiment in his favour, but ſtrove, as much as ſhe poſſibly could, to forget him quite.

Things ſeemed thus to be proceeding by degrees into their former calm and happy ſituation again, when, in a few days after Lucia and Portia had returned to town, they were ſitting together one morning, and their ſervants informed them that a perſon had brought a letter, which, he ſaid, he muſt deliver into Lucia's own hands, who immediately ordered him to be admitted, and on aſking from whom he had brought the letter, the meſſenger replied, that the contents

would

would inform her, for he could not, and then haſtily retired; upon opening the packet, ſhe found one addreſſed to herſelf, with another encloſed for Portia. That to herſelf was couched in the following words.

To LUCIA.

" Madam,

" WHILE I had any reaſon to " flatter myſelf with the hopes of " gaining your lovely daughter's affec- " tion, I confeſs, it was the firſt wiſh of " my heart, and the darling object of all " my ambition; nor am I inſenſible, that " while I was endeavouring to accom- " pliſh this favourite point, I had both " the honour and the happineſs of meet- " ing with your approbation, for which " you juſtly merit my moſt grateful ac- " knowledgments; but alas! Madam, " notwithſtanding this peculiar advan- " tage, I now find myſelf obliged to re- " linquiſh all my fondeſt hopes of feli- " city, ſince I am convinced (though too " late, I fear, to recover my peace of " mind) that theſe fond hopes have all " been raiſed by your goodneſs only.

" It was indeed to Portia's love I would " have been chiefly indebted for the bleſ-

" ſing

" ſing of calling her mine; but as events
" of this nature are not always in our own
" power, I carefully avoid all upbraid-
" ings; and the right, which you once
" ſo obligingly gave me, I now beg leave
" to transfer, (though heaven knows
" with what reluctance) to ſome more
" ſucceſsful rival, whoſe ſuperior merit,
" I doubt not, but you will readily ap-
" prove of, ſince the lovely Portia has ſo
" judiciouſly diſtinguiſhed it: for me, I
" am reduced to the deplorable reſolution
" of quitting my native country, to a-
" void, as well the odious circumſtance
" of being in any degree an obſtacle to
" her happineſs, as that of being a more
" immediate witneſs to the conſummate
" miſery of, Madam,

" Your faithful, but extremely

" Unfortunate humble ſervant,

" MACHAON."

That to Portia was as follows:

To PORTIA.

" Madam,
" SINCE fate has deprived me of the
" only felicity I prized in this world,
" that of contributing to yours, I chear-
" fully

" fully expoſe my life, not leſs as a ſacri-
" fice to your peace and cruelty, than as
" the only effectual expedient I have now
" left to rid myſelf of a burden, that I
" find is much too grievous to be borne
" longer; it will, however, be ſome
" conſolation to me, even in the article
" of death, to flatter myſelf, that this
" melancholy, but ſincere proof of my
" paſſion, how ill-fated ſoever it hath
" proved in regard to myſelf, may poſſi-
" bly help to convince you, how ardently I
" wiſhed to promote your happineſs;
" which, alas! muſt now be the employ-
" ment of that too fortunate engroſſer of
" all my Portia's charms.

" Since therefore I find all hopes of
" ſucceeding in your affection as utterly
" impoſſible, as is that of living without
" you, I baniſh myſelf for ever from
" your preſence, in order to ſeek that re-
" medy in ſome far diſtant clime, which,
" if adminiſtered here, might perhaps
" give you ſome diſquiet by a too late re-
" morſe, and unavailing pity for the
" highly injured and unhappy

" MACHAON."

The aſtoniſhment of both the ladies, when they had peruſed theſe extraordinary epiſtles,

epiſtles, could ſcarcely be equalled by any thing; but the rage and reſentment of Tradewell, at the high indignity offered to his whole family in the perſon of his ſiſter, whom the faithleſs Machaon had thus avowedly injured and inſulted; they all agreed, it was but too evident, that he laid hold of the late accident which had befallen him, (whatever might have been the real occaſion thereof) only as a mean artifice to break off the match, and fancied, that they now ſaw clearly into part of the vile ſubterfuge at leaſt; for they concluded, that nothing but the proſpect of a larger fortune, with ſome other lady, could have induced him thus ungenerouſly and abruptly to deſert a woman of Portia's acknowledged merit, with whom he had been, to all appearance, as ſolemnly engaged, as the ſtrongeſt obligations of love and honour could extend; where nothing, but the laſt ceremony, was wanting to render their union indiſſoluble: that he had lately received ſome dangerous wounds in a duel, was now out of all diſpute, as Tradewell had been informed by the ſurgeon that attended him; but from whom, or on what account, they could as yet by no means penetrate; they were indeed ſtrongly inclined to believe that it might, not improbably, be a deſerved

chaſtiſe-

chaſtiſement for the exerciſe of his perfidious talents on ſome other believing female.

But be this as it will, Tradewell determined to make him feel likewiſe the dire effects of his vengeance, and to that purpoſe went inſtantly to find him out; but a few days before the delivery of his letters he had actually decamped, according to their import, in order to viſit ſome foreign region, and intended, as Tradewell had learned from one of his acquaintance, to continue abroad for a conſiderable time, by which means, the proſpect of ſatisfaction for the preſent was entirely loſt.

Upon a deliberate review therefore of this whole procedure, both Lucia and Tradewell, as ſoon as their paſſion had a little ſubſided, ſeemed to hold in the utmoſt contempt, the man that could be capable of acting ſo baſe a part; and yet with no other end in view, as appeared to them, than barely that of making a moſt deſerving young lady unhappy, who had never injured him, or indeed any other perſon: ſuch an action, though it carries in appearance all the contrivance of a knave, can ſurely in fact afford matter of triumph to nothing higher in underſtanding than a fool.

Portia,

Portia, it muſt be owned, could not help feeling at firſt a more ſedate reſentment againſt him, and that in proportion to the degree of tenderneſs which ſhe had once entertained in his favour; but ſhe felt at the ſame time the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of knowing, as well the purity of her own actions, as that of her intentions; and this, as it greatly mitigated her indignation, ſo did it likewiſe ſoon reſtore that tranquility of mind, which ſhe had for ſome time been deprived of, by her anxious apprehenſions for Machaon's ſafety, ſo long as ſhe had any reaſon to ſuppoſe that he was faithful. She was very confident, that all who knew her would readily join in throwing the whole calumny upon the baſe deceiver; becauſe no woman could poſſibly be more nicely ſtrict in point of conduct than ſhe herſelf had always been; her own conſcience therefore, together with the opinion of her friends, having thus fairly acquitted her, ſhe hoped, and with great juſtice, that the world would do ſo too; for as theſe are two ſupreme courts, before which every body muſt at one time or other appear, however ſecure of a verdict in her own favour, ſhe might poſſibly think herſelf in the former, ſhe yet by no means neglected the approbation of the latter,

latter, having frequently obſerved, that a contempt of reputation did but too generally lead by degrees to an abſolute contempt of virtue.

CHAP. II.

Continuation of Portia's ſtory; compariſon between her conduct and that of the preſent race of young women of faſhion: in what particular the latter may be thought to reſemble the ladies of Sparta: the authoreſs here takes an opportunity of recommending to the conſideration of her fair readers, the vaſt advantage of putting always a proper value upon their own charms; which, ſhe thinks, can never be accompliſhed by expoſing themſelves too frequently to publick view; one main end of her coſmetick is to prevent this, ſince otherwiſe, beauty muſt inevitably become too cheap and contemptible: Portia's example is ſtrenuouſly recommended on this occaſion, as ſhe was a perfect miſtreſs of the whole ſecret of the grand coſmetick: her ſtory, which helps to illuſtrate this, proceeds on to the celebration of her nuptials.

I Believe it will hardly be denied, that Portia's whole conduct, particularly in regard to the intereſting event recited in the

the laſt chapter, (though it was indeed the firſt of the kind that ſhe had ever been engaged in) deſerved at leaſt the approbation of all the judging part of her own ſex; 'tis true, ſhe ſoon ſeemed to acquieſce under the diſappointment of a lover, who, before the appearance of his perfidy, was indeed extremely dear to her; and yet the latter part of his behaviour had ſomething in it ſo dark and myſterious, and at the ſame time ſo totally different from the former, that it would almoſt have induced any woman of leſs ſenſibility and penetration than Portia was miſtreſs of, to have ſuſpended her reſentment for a while, in hopes of coming to ſuch an eclairciſment, as might perhaps have eſtabliſhed a perfect reconciliation, eſpecially when it is conſidered, that this ſeeming acquieſcence in her was by no means the effect of her want of paſſion; for that ſhe had felt a more than common tenderneſs for the ungenerous Machaon, neither honour, nor good ſenſe, nor yet the ſtricteſt rules of female nicety, in the criſis of ſo near an union, could with reaſon oblige her to diſown; and that ſhe ſtill felt the ſame, in no ſmall degree, notwithſtanding the ſtrong proofs ſhe had received of his ingratitude, was, in fact, but too true; altho', in obedience to the dictates of virtue

tue and prudence, ſhe heſitated not to make an abſolute ſacrifice of this paſſion, at a time when it was manifeſtly to the prejudice of her health and peace of mind: but in her the Seeds of virtue and diſcretion had early been implanted, as in the happieſt ſoil, the due culture and improvement whereof had been attended to with no leſs induſtry than ſucceſs.

Such was the manner of her education, abſurd and inelegant as it may at this day appear; nor was ſhe upon that account leſs, but far more eminently qualified to acquit herſelf with true fortitude and greatneſs of mind, than even her illuſtrious name ſake, the celebrated wife of Brutus, the bare proſpect of fame in this world, immortal as the latter vainly thought it, (ſuch being the credulity of the human mind unenlightened by ſuperior wiſdom) was conſequently thought by her a ſufficient motive to undertake the atchievement of the greateſt things, to practice ſelf-denial, and bear the moſt excruciating pains without a murmur; whereas to the former, the proſpect of a crown immortal, of a crown celeſtial, avouched upon undeniable authority, could only be the adequate reward of virtue and true religion.

How different from this is the preſent turn of female education? the virtue of

many Greek and Roman ladies was confeſſedly tranſcendent; and though its motive, on compariſon, fell infinitely ſhort of ours, yet ſtill it was amiable, and highly animated beauty; which, by the way, fully evinces the utility of my coſmetic; how ſtrong and exemplary does it appear, even in its tranſmiſſion to poſterity; how emphatically does it extort our imitation? the finiſhed females of the preſent age ſeem indeed, in one reſpect at leaſt, to be bred up greatly in the Spartan taſte; that, I mean, of being quite fearleſs; with this additional improvement however, of fearing not even indecency, no nor infamy itſelf; ſo that they as far exceed the Grecian model, on the wrong ſide, as they ſeem ambitious of keeping ſhort of it, on the right; for the celebrated intrepidity of thoſe Spartan dames was, in truth, not leſs an abſolute freedom from all immorality and vice, and particularly from every conſcious violation of modeſty, than it was, from the abject Slavery of all imaginary terrors, which are ſo apt to weaken and debaſe the mind; whereas, among our modern heroines, this decent eſtabliſhment ſeems to be totally inverted.

That ſtrange faſhion indeed, which we have been told, prevailed ſo univerſally among the Lacedemonian ladies, of having certain

tain ſmall apertures in various parts of their upper garments, if faithfully reported, is, I confeſs, juſtly liable to the ſevereſt cenſure; but I have lately been informed by a gentleman, who is both a learned antiquarian and judicious hiſtorian, that this fact hath been vilely exaggerated, and that the faſhion, thus miſrepreſented, had its original riſe, much more unqueſtionably, from the neceſſity of the climate, which, for the moſt part, is intolerably hot, than either from any ſettled deſign to encourage an unguarded licentiouſneſs in attire, or even from the ridiculous vanity, ſo common among ourſelves, of exhibiting perhaps a tranſient glimpſe of an elegant, and finely proportioned limb: but ſuppoſing this laſt circumſtance to be the real motive for introducing that whimſical faſhion amongſt the Spartan fair, will it not ſtill be thought more conſiſtent with modeſty and true delicacy, than the impolitick, not to ſay indecent, practice of unmercifully diſplaying too much at once.

If the Spartan ladies, and particularly the married ones, had ſo ſcrupulous a regard to decency, that, next to the actual violation of their chaſtity, appearing abroad unveiled was always conſidered as the moſt heinous offence they could poſſi-

bly commit againſt it, what judgment is to be found of the preſent race, both of virgins and matrons amongſt ourſelves? who ſeem to think it highly abſurd that any thing, but uglineſs or ſhame, ſhould now be muffled up in a veil: the difference of climates is, no doubt, very conſiderable; yet, notwithſtanding the allowance that is to be made for the extraordinary degree of Warmth which prevails in ſome, I ſhould however think it hardly powerful enough to produce univerſally ſuch an effect on the conſtitutions of the inhabitants, as might be able to ſubvert and deſtroy the laws of decency, which are founded in reaſon, which ought to ſubſiſt, and which always have ſubſiſted, at leaſt in all civilized countries: in thoſe of the eaſt particularly, we find the uſe of the veil to have obtained even ſo early as in the days of Abraham; and not without a view to the true Emolument of the ſex in general, but more eſpecially ſtill to that of beauty; for Abimelech thought he could not pay a higher compliment to the extraordinary beauty of Sarah, than by preſenting her with a veil; though it muſt be confeſſed, that it was at the ſame time a ſevere reproof for her want of caution in venturing abroad without one.

But

But whatever allowance, on account of climate, may poſſibly be made for the ladies of the eaſt, in regard to the negligence and looſeneſs of their apparel, ſurely thoſe of the northern regions can hardly expect to be comprehended within the privilege of ſuch an allowance; and we, in England, I think, as little as any of the reſt, who are ſubject to ſo unaccountable a variety and uncertainty in our atmoſphere; yet, ſo ſtrong is our propenſity for admiration, that we nevertheleſs go on to expoſe ourſelves, without the leaſt reſtraint, to all the inclemency of ſuch a climate, and, what is ſtill more fatal, to the very contempt of thoſe by whom we would be admired; nay by far the greateſt number of us are now grown ſo intrepid, as to dare to let the world ſee, that we have no charms; and yet very few of us, I believe, can, in the event, boaſt with truth, that the profuſeneſs of our ſincerity, upon this occaſion, is able to apologize effectually for ſo deplorable a defect.

Thoſe indeed, who haply come under the denomination of beauties, would ſeem, by their conduct, to perſuade the world to look upon decency, if at all as a virtue, yet only fit to be practiſed by the frightful and the vulgar; an unlimited

freedom in amuſements, dreſs, and manners, being, in their opinion, much more conſiſtent with the dignity of their charms: ſhall I ſay, that they are too generous and publick ſpirited, to conceal any thing which they ſuppoſe capable of giving them even a momentary power of pleaſing, though often ſo unmercifully at the expence of their own beauty? or does mere vanity and ſelf-love ſuggeſt the folly of ſuch a conduct? but they ſeem not to conſider, that, let it be which it will, they eſſentially injure their own intereſt, by too precipitately foreſtalling, as it were, the pleaſure of a lover's imagination, and preventing the courſe of that curioſity, which, otherwiſe, would probably be raiſed many degrees higher in their favour: in regard to the beauties of the mind, if any are now allowed to be eſteemed as ſuch, I think it can hardly be denied, that, in general, they ſeem to be full as much neglected, if not as induſtriouſly ſuppreſſed, as thoſe of the perſon are highly held in honour, and pompouſly exhibited to mankind; from a received notion, which, how palpably ſoever it be founded in error, ſeems to be growing into an eſtabliſhment, that the ſex have ſcarcely one external charm that cān at prevent be too profuſely expoſed to publick view.

But

But let us not be ignorant, my fair country-women, that the value of every thing human, except that of virtue, diminiſhes but too ſenſibly in proportion to our nearer acquaintance with it; the outward eye muſt leave ſomething for that of the imagination to dwell upon, and to diſcover by degrees, or the object ſoon becomes too common and contemptible for farther ſpeculation: a certain diſguſt may ariſe from the ſatiety of the eye, as well as from that of the ſtomach, and it requires no ſmall degree of judgment to modify their reſpective objects ſo agreeably, as to preſerve a conſtant appetite in both; for otherwiſe it is poſſible to ſtarve in the midſt of the moſt profuſe plenty: what, but it's ſcarcity, can in fact be allowed to conſtitute the real value of the diamond? it's peculiar hardneſs, merely as ſuch, renders it by no means an object the more deſirable to us on that account; and in regard to it's tranſcendent luſtre, which is the ſupreme charm that captivates our hearts, from it's ſuppoſed ſimilitude to that of our eyes, the factitious compoſitions of art have now almoſt ſucceſsfully rivalled even that; yet notwithſtanding all theſe ſeeming diſadvantages, the true brilliant, ſo long as it con-

tinues in ſcarcity, will ſtill retain it ineſtimable value.

But ſays the flippant nymph, by folly rendered far leſs fair than nature had intended her, of what conſequence, pray then, is beauty, if it is not to be ſeen? ſurely the diamond can never diſplay its luſtre in the mine; true, nor is it dug up and poliſhed with ſuch incredible labour and expence, to be proſtituted on every ſtall, or vilely hawked about in every pedlar's box; when virtue and wiſdom are the guardians of beauty, it's charms will always command reverence, as well as love; it never can be then improperly expoſed to view; whenever it appears, unabated admiration becomes the willing tribute of every ſpectator; not vanity it's triumph, though it's power proves invincible, and it's ſucceſs as rapid as that of Cæſar, when he came, and ſaw, and conquered.

Conqueſt, I know, is no leſs the darling ambition of us women, than it is of the men; we affect to conquer thoſe who conquer all the world beſides; it is generally eſteemed by us as the chief teſt of beauty; be it ſo, but let us not, like our enterpriſing neighbours, the *French*, injudiciouſly make conqueſts, at a vaſt expence, which either are not tenable when made,

made, or are not worth the keeping: the firſt conqueſt, I would recommend to the attention of my fair country-women, is that over their own hearts, and particularly over their vanity; ſucceſs in this makes much a quicker progreſs, than is commonly imagined, towards a conqueſt over thoſe of other people; it blunts effectually the ſtings of envy and ill-nature, and ſoon corrects the too fond propenſities of ſelf-love; the acquiſition of eſteem is the certain conſequence thereof, without whoſe friendly alliance the whole artillery of female charms but operates to little purpoſe, ſince happineſs hath irreverſibly decreed that love, without eſteem, can never pay the full price of beauty.

By ſo complete a conqueſt as this, over our own hearts, how unlovely ſoever we may have appeared before, we are inſtantly veſted with the power of becoming all amiable and fair; and on the contrary, from being by nature's bounty all angelick before, we may, by the neglect of this conqueſt, become downright diſagreeable and frightful: in ſhort, the whole ſecret of the grand coſmetick conſiſts in the accompliſhment of this deſirable point; it's aim being not leſs the improvement of happineſs, than it is of beauty; and of this important ſecret the amiable Por-

tia was indeed a perfect miſtreſs, as I hope the ſequel of her hiſtory will abundantly confirm, to which I ſhall now beg my reader's leave to return.

After the departure of the faithleſs Machaon, in the abrupt manner related in my laſt chapter, the injured, but unreſenting Portia, lived extremely retired for near the ſpace of two years, and that chiefly in the country; where, added to the inſtructive ſociety of an excellent mother, and a few ſelect friends, ſhe enjoyed without interruption all that calm ſerenity of mind, which fits us beſt for contemplation and the reliſh of true happineſs: but about the expiration of this period, ſhe was unavoidably obliged to relinquiſh her agreeable retreat, by the unexpected arrival of her brother Dennis from Amſterdam, who came purpoſely to make a viſit to his friends in England, and was not altogether without hopes of being able to obtain Lucia's permiſſion, that his ſiſter Portia might accompany him in his return thither; but in this requeſt he could not ſucceed, it being by no means a ſcheme that was agreeable to either of thoſe ladies.

Dennis had, it ſeems, ſome few years before, contracted an intimate friendſhip with an Engliſh gentleman abroad, who, at the commencement of their acquaintance,

tance, was ſecretary to one of the moſt lucrative embaſſies that is ſent from the crown of Great Britain; and as this friendſhip of theirs had all along been warmly ſupported by reciprocal proofs of the moſt diſintereſted benevolence and integrity, ſo did it ſubſiſt at this time in the full height of its fervour; which, by the way, made no ſmall addition to the motive of Dennis's preſent viſit: the gentleman, his friend, whom I ſhall call by the name of Careleſs, was now ſettled in London, and poſſeſſed at this time of two very profitable employments under the government, beſides a handſome paternal eſtate in the north of England; ſo that he lived in affluence and ſplendor, and received and entertained his old friend with no leſs ſincerity than elegance: and indeed Dennis, even in the immediate article of his buſineſs, had repeatedly experienced the agreeable effects of this friendſhip; for beſides other advantages that accrued to him from thence, Careleſs had intereſted himſelf ſo ſucceſsfully in his favour, as to obtain an order that all the remittances, which were made on account of the embaſſy before-mentioned, as well as on ſome others, ſhould paſs through his hands; ſo that long before this particular period, theſe ſervices had

given Careleſs many opportunities of being well known, and a juſt right to be treated, as he was, with peculiar diſtinction, in the family of Dennis's younger brother Charles, the merchant, in London; beſides the circumſtance of his having occaſionally had bills of exchange for conſiderable ſums to negotiate with the latter.

The anceſtors of Careleſs had, it ſeems, been always remarkable for their inviolable fidelity and attachment to the true intereſt of their country; and their deſcendants valued themſelves not leſs on that account, than for the honour of having derived their pedigree from the firſt ſole monarch of Britain; the father of Careleſs had particularly the honour to command a regiment in the ſervice of England, as likewiſe that of being a general officer: under the auſpicious influence therefore of ſo fair a proſpect of intereſt, as all theſe flattering circumſtances ſeemed to exhibit, Careleſs, being an only child, added to a natural good underſtanding all the uſeful, as well as ornamental Advantages of a liberal education, and moreover, what is not very common among the young and gay, an early and cloſe application to buſineſs; ſo that it is not at all wonderful, that we find him at this time baſk-

ing

ing in the ſun-ſhine of court-favour: to his perſon indeed nature ſeemed to have been rather profuſely kind, for he had the face of an Adonis; he was of the taller ſize, and perfectly well ſhaped; travel, and frequent converſation with the polite world, had given him that peculiar eaſe of manner, and agreeable facility of addreſs, which, in all civilized nations, ſo happily characterize the man of faction; he had moreover ſuch a fund of wit and humour, ſo much life and expreſſion in his eyes, that, wherever he appeared, he ſoon became the darling of the fair; none of whom, however, had as yet been able to ſubdue his volatile heart, which triumphed not a little in the fond perſuaſion, that the ſecurity of its freedom was altogether impregnable; but in this, notwithſtanding the vaſt extent of his power (tho' he was in truth no coxcomb) he happened to be quite miſtaken; as, I may venture to affirm, every commander in chief of an army, muſt be, who precipitately hazards the iſſue of a battle, before he knows the true ſtrength of the enemy; for the charming Portia, with whom Careleſs had now more frequent opportunities of converſing, by his repeated viſits to her brother Dennis, ſhe, I ſay, ſoon convinced this redoubted hero, that the impreg-

impregnable fortreſs of his heart was in ſome danger; and that the higheſt flights of wit and humour, together with the whole parade of perſonal accompliſhments, can no more ſecure the envied owner from the ſhafts of love, than the higheſt honours, and the greateſt affluence, can from thoſe of death at the appointed hour.

In ſhort, Portia had irrevocably captivated this roving ſwain, who would gladly now have ſacrificed to her ſmiles his ſo much boaſted liberty; but the ingratitude and indignity, with which ſhe had been treated by the ungenerous Machaon, roſe freſh in her remembrance, and deterred her from liſtening to the addreſſes of Careleſs with that complacency and attention, which perhaps ſhe otherwiſe might have done, as ſhe confeſſed it impoſſible, that any woman could be wholly inſenſible of his merit. In this ſtate of uncertainty, therefore, he applied to the good offices of his friend Dennis, whom he had long before made the confident of his paſſion, and who indeed had intereſted himſelf in the ſucceſs thereof with all imaginable ardour and ſincerity; yet he could not, at the ſame time, but greatly applaud his ſiſter, for the caution and prudence which ſhe determined to make the

invariable rule of every part of her conduct; ſo that his advice to Careleſs was, by no means to preſs the affair too warmly, but to leave it to time, and the aſſiduity of his paſſion, to bring about the full completion of his wiſhes; which, according to his obſervation, was not to be deſpaired of, as Careleſs was aſſured of always meeting with the moſt polite reception in his brother's family.

The houſe of Tradewell, eſpecially whenever Lucia and Portia were in town, was the well known reſort of many of the eminently wiſe and virtuous of both ſexes; hither they came, as to a kind of academy, to improve and entertain each other, but never by the propagation of ſcandal or vanity; Portia was indeed not like the generality of her own ſex, vain, trifling, and anxiouſly induſtrious to lay ſnares for new lovers; was the affection of one man of merit to be obtained upon no other terms than theſe, I am ſatisfied, ſhe would have continued ſingle for her whole life; ſhe felt without doubt, and that in no ſmall degree, the taſte for amuſements, which is ſo natural to all young people, but then ſhe had acquired the happy art of indulging her's only with ſuch as were rational, innocent at leaſt, if not highly inſtructive; for otherwiſe

therwiſe, to her, they ceaſed to be amuſements; that of converſation amongſt a few ſenſible friends was always her firſt choice, and ſuch as afforded her more real gratification, than all the vain parade of an aſſembly, or the tumultuous riot of a ball; in the former there was ſomething that ſhe might always appropriate, ſomething to carry off from thence as her own; from the latter nothing, in fact, but diſguſt and fatigue; except indeed, that the being immoderately ſtared at by one ſex, and as immoderately envied on that account by the other, may be eſteemed, and I cannot help thinking, that it too frequently is by a multitude of women, as the moſt ſupreme of all amuſements.

But this would have given Portia rather exquiſite pain than pleaſure; nor was ſhe under a neceſſity of trying the ſucceſs of an experiment, ſo thoroughly diſagreeable to herſelf, how flattering ſoever the view, with which it is undertaken, may generally be imagined; for though all who ſaw her, as certainly found ſomething in her to admire; yet, without being expoſed to the probable ill conſequences of aſpiring at publick and promiſcuous admiration, ſhe had the happineſs of finding a ſufficient homage paid to her charms, and likewiſe of having all her hours, intended

tended for amuſement, moſt agreeably engaged, either at home, or at ſome friend's houſe, in the ſociety of people, if not of the firſt quality, at leaſt, of the firſt merit, whoſe approbation, as ſhe was convinced that it was not leſs the reſult of ſincerity than judgment, made always her higheſt pleaſure; and from this approbation it is, as well as from my own knowledge of its being juſtly founded, that I venture to pronounce the following lines of Milton, as not inapplicable to the character of my ever honoured, and much admired friend.

Wiſdom in diſcourſe with her
Loſes diſcountenanced, and like folly ſhews;
Authority and reaſon on her wait,
As one intended firſt, not after made
Occaſionally; and to conſummate all,
Greatneſs of mind, and nobleneſs their
ſeat
Build in her loveliеſt, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelick placed.

But Portia's preſent ſcene of happineſs, great as it was, or indeed that of any other young lady, in her ſituation, could hardly be thought perfect, ſo long as any material circumſtance was wanting to increaſe it, that might be reaſonably in her own power to ſupply; and by this circumſtance

cumſtance, my readers will eaſily comprehend, I mean that tender intercourſe of mutual Love and friendſhip, that reſults from the willing and inſeparable union of two fond hearts in the conjugal ſtate; which, without all doubt, from its peculiar variety of endearing reſources, was originally intended to conſtitute our higheſt felicity in this world; and which, when judiciouſly engaged in, will, I believe, even in the preſent pious times, be generally allowed to anſwer that deſirable end, more effectually than any other ſcheme is capable of doing: as no woman therefore could, by the ſtrength of ſuperior judgment, be more thoroughly convinced of this truth, than was the amiable Portia, ſo no woman, I believe, ever exerted greater fortitude, in making every wayward inclination of her own ſubmit implicitly to all its dictates; and I may alſo add, as a further confirmation of her title to ſucceſs, that few women were ever more juſtly diſtinguiſhed for perſonal merit than herſelf.

The criſis of her fate however was now near at hand, when it was ſoon likely to appear, how far all her prudence, and all her merit, might be able to ſecure that felicity which was ſo juſtly her due; for Careleſs, in the further proſecution of his ſuit,

ſuit, had acted with ſo much policy and addreſs, that, by the aſſiſtance of his friend Dennis, he effectually gained over the whole family to his intereſt, who began to conſider his alliance, not only as unexceptionable, but highly deſirable; while Portia, whoſe ſincerity and openneſs of heart was equal to the reſt of her virtues, being preſſed a little by her mother, confeſſed that ſhe had but one objection to the match propoſed; that, in regard to the perſon, underſtanding, and accompliſhments of Careleſs, ſhe believed, the moſt critical, or fantaſtical of her whole ſex, could find nothing to condemn; that ſhe felt in herſelf as ſmall a propenſity to avarice, as to ambition, and conſequently that ſhe had nothing to object to him on account of fortune; but as her happineſs was to depend ſtill more eſſentially on the temper, the principles, and the true character of her huſband, than upon circumſtances ſeemingly more ſtriking, becauſe they came more immediately under obſervation, ſhe thought it abſolutely neceſſary to acquire as perfect a knowledge of the former as ſhe poſſibly could, before ſhe finally reſolved to embark on a voyage for life.

But Careleſs wanted not powerful friends to make the moſt favourable report of him upon

upon this occaſion ; he aſſured his beloved Portia, that, from the firſt moment of his being acquainted with her, which was now upwards of four years, he had inceſſantly ſighed for her in ſecret ; that, from the inferior ſtate of his fortune at that time, he deſpaired of ſucceſs, or he had then made her an offering of his heart ; and that on the death of his father, and his own preferment, which immediately enſued, he had firmly intended it, but was prevented by being informed of her engagement with Machaon, which blaſted all his hopes of happineſs, and plunged him into the loweſt abyſs of miſery and deſpair ; from whence the ſtrange revolution that afterwards happened in that gentleman's heart had alone recovered him, as it gave him an opportunity of pleading the unalterable paſſion he had ſo long entertained for her : he expected not abſolute credit, he ſaid, barely upon his own aſſertion, but referred her, for the truth of every thing he advanced, to her brother Dennis, who had long been the confident of his paſſion for the lovely Portia, and whoſe affection for her, in every thing that regarded her true happineſs, ſhould be conſidered as a ſufficient ſecurity againſt the apprehenſion of any unmerited favour, or partiality, that his

friendſhip

friendſhip for Careleſs could poſſibly incline him to ſhew, on ſo important an occaſion; more eſpecially as his integrity was always known to be without the leaſt blemiſh.

This candid behaviour in Careleſs made all Portia's remaining heſitation ſoon ſubſide; inclination, it muſt be confeſſed, pleaded very powerfully in his favour; but ſtill ſhe conſented not to crown his wiſhes, till he had previouſly obtained in form the ſanction of all her friends approbation to ratify her choice; which, as they had for a conſiderable time been prejudiced in his favour, was ſpeedily accompliſhed; ſo that after a ſhort interval allowed for making all the neceſſary preparations, this agreeable couple were at length happily united.

But here I muſt not omit to obſerve, for fear of being thought deficient in a matter of ſo great conſequence to the true emolument of mankind, that the celebration of theſe memorable nuptials was performed in the country, and that all the young ladies of Portia's acquaintance aſſiſted at the ceremony, like ſo many blooming daughters of the ſpring, decked with every ſumptuous ornament that could poſſibly contribute to the embelliſhments of beauty, but far more charming

ing ſtill in virgin modeſty arrayed; all theſe, I ſay, accompanied by the virtues and the graces, in decent cavalcade, made up the lovely Portia's bridal train, and ſtrewed flowers before her in the way, as they conducted her to the temple; thither the thrice happy Careleſs, with exalted mien, had haſted on before, where Hymen waited to receive their plighted vows; from hence, as ſoon as the awful ceremony was over, the company all adjourned to Tradewell's villa, where an entertainment was provided for them, equal, in point of elegance, as well as profuſion, to his large fortune, and calculated not leſs to honour the diſtinguiſhed merit of the wedded pair, than to promote that chearfulneſs and feſtive gaiety of heart that ought always to reign on ſo joyous an occaſion.

At night, in order to render this ſcene ſtill more magnificent, a ſuperb firework was play'd off, in which were exhibited, to the great amuſement of all the ſpectators, ſeveral curious emblematical figures; amongſt the reſt, particularly that of beauty, ſupported on one ſide by virtue, and on the other by wiſdom; with true happineſs cloſe in the rear, and Cupid in the front, preſenting in a ſuppliant poſture a great number of hearts, and his whole quiver, in token of abſolute ſubjection:

jection: this little group, diſtinguiſhable by the reſpective enſigns that peculiarly characteriſed each of them, was ſo contrived, that, like the aſbeſtus, they appeared to be wholly incapable of being conſumed by the power of the flames; while numberleſs other female figures, but attended by a very different train, viz. by coquetry, by vanity, and folly, either dazzled the eyes of the beholders, perhaps for the Space of a ſingle minute or ſo, and then vaniſhed for ever into ſmoke and oblivion; or, if by the force of ſuperior charms they happened to ſucceed in the conqueſt of a heart, they were yet wholly at a loſs how to preſerve it, ſince diſcord, that ſpurious brat of ſelf-love, was always ſure to aſſume the poſt of happineſs, and blaſt irrecoverably the whole triumph of beauty.

After many other ingenious repreſentations, in the ſame way, the evening, as is uſual on ſuch occaſions, concluded with a grand ball, in which the charming Portia, comparatively with all the other fair ones preſent, appeared like Diana among her nymphs; or indeed, to convey ſtill a more lively image of her beauty, it appeared as tranſcendently bright, and yet as mild, as the ſuperior luſtre of the moon, in the full height of all its ſplen-

dor, when compared with the diſtant twinkling of the ſtars.

CHAP. III.

Continuation of Portia's ſtory.

THE exquiſite happineſs derivable from the conjugal union, when virtue, judgment, and inclination co-operate mutually in both the parties, is much eaſier to be imagined, than it can be deſcribed, except by thoſe who have thoroughly experienced it; which, it muſt be confeſſed, the couple mentioned in my laſt chapter did in the higheſt degree; they, both of them, abounded in what the world allow to be good Senſe, ſeemed to have conſummate virtue, and an inexhauſtible fund of affection for each other, in ſo much that Careleſs, who for ſome years behaved as the ſincere, the boſom friend of his beloved Portia, was often known, from the fulneſs of a fond heart, to repeat the following lines out of Milton.

Nothing
So much delights me, as thoſe graceful acts,
Thoſe thouſand decencies that daily flow

From all her words and actions, mixed
with love
And ſweet compliance, which declare un-
feigned
Union of minds, or in us both one ſoul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.

This picture, as highly finiſhed as it appears to be, was nevertheleſs the exact portrait of the amiable Portia; if her beauty and many virtues, while yet in her virgin ſtate, claimed, with any degree of juſtice, a right to that envied power of charming, which ſhe had acquired, they now blazed out to infinitely greater advantage, having an additional incentive, and, of all others, ſurely the moſt powerful in ſuch a caſe, that of being, as it were, collected to a point by a ſtrong deſire of pleaſing the beloved object, which neceſſarily occaſioned their operating with ſtill greater force: and indeed the happy Careleſs, as I have juſt obſerved, was, for a conſiderable time, ſo far from ſeeming inattentive to the true value of ſuch a bleſſing, that he rather ſeemed to be ſtrongly actuated, both by affection and a deep ſenſe of honour, to do all the juſtice in his power to the deſerving inſtrument thereof; and by conſulting her happineſs with the tendereſt aſſiduity, to con-

vince her how ſenſible he was that, at the ſame time, he highly enhanced his own.

Thus, for ſome years, did this engaging couple go on in a continued courſe of virtue and happineſs, induſtriouſly regarding even the minuteſt circumſtance, which they thought capable of improving the latter, provided always, that it was found to be ſtrictly conſiſtent with the dictates of the former: with this diſpoſition they would frequently go into different companies, that they might return to each other with new delight; where they were always ſure of finding that rational entertainment, that can alone compenſate for the painful attention, and loſs of time, which ceremony too often indiſpenſibly obliges us to beſtow on trifles; but particularly, if the fatigues of buſineſs, or any of the more untoward occurrences of life, from which no condition of mortality is wholly exempted, had at any time affected the ſpirits of Careleſs, or given him even a momentary diſcompoſure of temper, he was ſure to find, at home, a ſovereign balm for that and every other woe, in the ſenſible, the endearing ſociety of his truly affectionate wife; whoſe whole behaviour ſufficiently convinced him, that he was now fully poſſeſſed of all the ſweets domeſtic happineſs could yield; for it

muſt

muſt be remarked, that Portia's prudence, in the management of her houſhold, was not leſs diſtinguiſhable, than her affection for her huſband; which latter indeed brought forth every latent virtue to its full maturity.

Though the eſtate which Careleſs inherited from his father was not a great one, his whole income, including the addition of Portia's fortune, being by no means inconſiderable, was however at this time ſuch as might very well have allowed them to live, if they choſe it, in all that State of Splendor and Diſſipation, which is now thought ſo eſſentially neceſſary towards making a becoming eclat in the gay world; but this ſhe had the wiſdom to ſtipulate previouſly againſt, being perfectly inconſiſtent, both with her own natural diſpoſition, and, in her preſent ſituation, with the proſpect of an increaſing family: as an indulgence in the mere vanities of life made by no means a part of her happineſs, ſhe transferred many of thoſe expences, that are uſually incurred by the ſuperior elegance of female taſte, to very different uſes, yet to ſuch as afforded her, in that way, an infinitely greater pleaſure, than they otherwiſe poſſibly could, viz. to the relief of indigent objects, whom, in proportion to the weight

of their afflictions, ſhe thought far more worthy thereof: but this ſhe did indeed with ſo much alacrity, as obliged her to diſclaim all pretenſions to the boaſted merit of that ſelf-mortification, which is ſometimes obſerved to be the attendant on charitable acts.

In ſhort, in her houſe reigned one continued ſcene of harmony and peace, yet without any of the inſipidity of a dead calm; as did likewiſe that of plenteouſneſs, without any of the fatal conſequences of too liberal a profuſion: whether from a higher degree of underſtanding, joined to the force of an excellent example, or merely from the peculiar favour of fortune, I ſhall not determine, but ſuch was the good order, the diligence and fidelity of all their domeſticks, ſo exactly punctual were they in the performance of their reſpective duties, and in obſerving the hours appointed for employment and reſt, for devotion, repaſt, and amuſement, that this family may juſtly be ſaid to have reſembled ſome ſmall, but well-regulated monarchy, wholly independent within itſelf; where the wife, like an able firſt miniſter of ſtate, of conſummate probity and wiſdom, [if with ſuch a treaſure as this heaven has yet ever vouchſafed to bleſs any of the numerous kingdoms of the earth]

earth] in exerting the power, which was delegated to her by her huſband, always judiciouſly tempered ſo much lenity with rigour, ſuch well-proportioned rewards with puniſhment, as ſeldom failed to promote thereby not only their own mutual happineſs, but that alſo of all their domeſticks, without which indeed their own would have been eſteemed by them as quite imperfect.

The great advantages which Portia had acquired both from books, and a conſtant intercourſe and converſation with people of ſuperior wiſdom and knowledge to herſelf, very naturally inclined her to avoid all intimate connection with the gay unthinking part of her own ſex, as well as with the leſs improved, and more immoral part of the other; being totally at a loſs how to reconcile to the dictates of reaſon and prudence the unaccountable, but too common practice of trifling away time, amidſt repeated ſcenes of faſhionable follies, which ſhe obſerved to reign triumphantly amongſt both; and though ſhe was really poſſeſſed of every requiſite to render herſelf extremely agreeable in the moſt polite aſſemblies, yet, for the reaſon juſt aſſigned, ſhe often preferred the being alone, where, however, ſhe was always employed, but never embarraſſed:

her temper, by the conſtant exertion of reaſon, was all placable and gentle, tho' her paſſions, if raiſed, were very ſtrong; but then they were ſo ſtrictly guarded, that moſt of the common accidents of life found her always inacceſſible to their attacks: ſhe had indeed a ſtrength of judgment far above the common ſtandard of moſt female minds, yet was ſhe ſo totally free from vanity on this account, that it might be ſaid, with truth, ſhe was in a manner careleſs of fame, or rather, that ſhe ſeemed a miggard of her knowledge, except amidſt the happy circle of her choſen friends, and to them ſhe would ſhine out in full ſplendor.

She poſſeſſed too true a greatneſs of ſoul, to ſuffer herſelf to be dazzled or captivated by the mere external grandeur of what is commonly called high life, or ever to bow the knee to any of the ſucceſsful efforts of ambition; ſhe looked down on the incorrigible immoralities of the great world, with as much deteſtation and contempt, as ſhe treated the merit and good ſenſe of thoſe, who had perhaps little elſe to recommend them, with ſingular deference and reſpect: but particularly, amongſt her many other virtues, ſhe never omitted to behave towards her inferiors with great affability and condeſcenſion,

cenſion, and uſed to ſay, that there was a degree of humanity in ſo doing which ſhe thought indiſpenſible; that the diſtinctions of ſuperiority, though ſometimes reaſonable, when immediately founded in merit, were however, for the moſt part, merely adventitious and accidental; and often undeſerved, though as often confidently aſſumed; that as virtue alone gave true diſtinction and dignity, the condition of life, how abject ſoever in which that was found, ſhould notwithſtanding be always eſteemed highly reſpectable; that the affability and politeneſs, with which we uſually addreſs our ſuperiors and equals, has in truth but little merit, in compariſon with that we ought to ſhew towards our inferiors; it being though a kind of voluntary tax on that boaſted diſtinction, yet ſuch, in fact, as neceſſarily preſerves the very eſſence thereof; and proves the equity of its being always promptly paid; which pride alone, that monſtrous offspring of ignorance and wealth, refuſes to acknowledge: it is indeed, of all other taxes whatſoever, by much the leaſt expenſive, and although it cannot be abſolutely demanded, as of right, ſince it is altogether arbitrary, yet ſtill it ought to be punctually paid, as a ſmall, though in ſome degree a grateful

compenſation for the comparative abjectneſs of an inferior condition; but eſpecially, as without the punctual payment thereof, all true diſtinction, how cavalierly ſoever it may be claimed, becomes utterly void in itſelf.

But further ſtill, abſtract the influence of wealth, and how ſmall a ſhare of diſtinction and reſpect would many of the nobleſs, whom I could name, be intitled to; and yet, in fact, money can no more purchaſe true friendſhip or eſteem, which are the chief motives of reſpect, than it can purchaſe love; for attachments of this kind, where virtue, merit, and beauty, concentre in the ſame object, are altogether involuntary: 'tis true indeed, wealth can ſometimes procure at leaſt the ſemblance both of love and friendſhip; but this is often no more than the deluſion of art, and our own ſelf-love together, the whole force whereof, if once detected, as it very eaſily may be, by a judicious obſerver, is inſtantly deſtroyed; becauſe it is ſincerity alone, which conſtitutes the real value of both, that can fairly ſtand the teſt; to eſtabliſh which, beſides the neceſſity of a length of time, merit muſt ſet off virtue to advantage, in one caſe, as ſympathy of inclination muſt, in the other, before any juſt eſti-

mate

mate can be found in regard to the ſecurity of either.

By ſuch ſentiments as theſe did Portia direct the manner of her behaviour towards all her fellow-creatures; but theſe ſentiments were derived from ſtill a higher ſource; they flowed immediately from an habitual practice of the chriſtian religion, from an unalterable conviction of the rectitude of its principles; for indeed ſhe was, in the juſteſt ſenſe of the expreſſion, truly religious; without the leaſt tincture of ſuperſtition, on the one hand, or enthuſiaſm on the other; her piety and devotion were rational, and proceeded from the moſt awful reverence, gratitude, and love, for the ſupreme being; and yet the conſciouſneſs of her own unblameable conduct, whether in the character of daughter, wife, mother, or miſtreſs of a family, never once inſpired her with the uncharitable pride of cenſuring thoſe who failed in ſome points of their duty; the ſocial tenderneſs of her diſpoſition ever ſuggeſted a ſtrong degree of compaſſion and allowance for the weakneſs and infirmities of human nature, and where her purſe could not be uſeful, her advice, example, and inſtruction often were.

In this manner did the life of Careleſs, and that of his beloved Portia glide on

for ſome years, in an uninterrupted ſtate of harmony and the higheſt bliſs; the conſtant flow of proſperity and ſucceſs, that attended their worldly affairs, appeared only as the juſt reward of all their virtues; in ſhort, there ſeemed to be in them but one ſoul to animate two bodies, to highten happineſs, by making it always mutual; by all their real friends they were ſincerely eſteemed, by their children moſt tenderly beloved and revered, and by their domeſticks almoſt adored; they were indeed the admiration, if not the envy, of every body elſe who knew them: but alas! the very beſt conſtituted ſyſtems of human felicity are ſometimes obſerved to prove inſtable; nor am I by any means certain, that viciſſitudes of this kind are, with juſtice, always to be eſteemed as real misfortunes; ſince, otherwiſe, 'tis not altogether improbable, but we might grow by degrees into a kind of habitual ſecurity, and an impious forgetfulneſs of that bounteous ſource, whence all our bleſſings flow, and become utterly regardleſs of all preparation for that inevitable period, which is to be the commencement of a ſtill happier ſtate: there ſeems to be interwoven in the very conſtitution of human nature an unaccountable propenſity to wavering and change; in ſo much that a cele-

a celebrated French writer has aſſerted, that men ſometimes differ full as much from themſelves, as they do from many parts of the brute creation; in regard to the abſolute truth of this aſſertion, I ſhall not take upon me to determine, but ſo far as it holds good, I humbly apprehend the chief reaſon thereof to be this, that the propenſity in queſtion is ſuch, as the general practice of moral virtue, unſupported by a uniform and ſteady adherence to the chriſtian ſyſtem, is not always ſufficiently able to correct.

Of this indeed the ſubſequent conduct of Careleſs was an undeniable proof; who, after having ſpent ſeveral years in the moſt rational ſcenes of virtue and true happineſs, that this terreſtrial globe is capable of affording, fell, in a moſt unlucky minute, into the acquaintance of a perſon, whom I ſhall here call lord Vaſer; this nobleman wanted neither genius, fortune, nor the peculiar advantage of many perſonal accompliſhments to render himſelf not only extremely agreeable, but a uſeful member of ſociety; yet was he utterly void of every moral principle, and by abuſing ſhamefully miſemployed thoſe talents, which might otherwiſe have rendered him highly valuable, a bleſſing to his friends, and a ſhining ornament to his

country; but alas! he was not only a ſtranger, but an implacable enemy to all religion and moral rectitude; his youth had been entirely corrupted by a bad education, he had been early trained up in the prompt ſchool of pride and folly, ſpoiled by flattery, and ruined by pleaſure; this unſeaſonable freedom from all kinds of reſtraint firſt led him into many thoughtleſs amuſements, which at laſt ended in the moſt flagrant vices.

To the wiſe and good it is a deplorable, though a very obvious reflection, to obſerve how ſeldom people, in an elevated ſphere of life, are diſpoſed to ſee, and acknowledge themſelves in the wrong; a difference in circumſtances may without doubt ſometimes aggravate, or mitigate a crime, but this can be in a ſmall degree only, ſince the avowed violation of any thing ſo ſacred as moral obligation, indiſputably renders the prince himſelf criminal, as well as the beggar; and, even in the commiſſion of the very ſame crime, often conſiderably more ſo; becauſe ignorance muſt be admitted as a juſter plea, on the part of the latter, than authority and power, however uncontrouled, can be on that of the former; eſpecially, as his example is always of ſuch importance, that he becomes in a great meaſure anſwerable

ſwerable for the conſequences thereof; and indeed this rule holds proportionably through all ranks and degrees, from the higheſt to the loweſt of mankind: amongſt the great therefore, inſtead of their attempting, either by the falſe ſpirit of haughtineſs and authority to juſtify, on the one hand, or by the mean ſpirit of ſubterfuge and evaſion to palliate, on the other, whatever is palpably wrong, how infinitely more noble and generous would it be in them, if not to amend abſolutely, at leaſt to acknowledge ingenuouſly their own errors, and, by ſo doing, to prevent in ſome degree the fatal effects of their example; I think, I may almoſt venture to affirm, that it would be more glorious to riſe in this manner, than never to have fallen at all; yet I would by no means be underſtood to recommend ſo dangerous an experiment to thoſe, who are already eſtabliſhed in the ways of virtue.

To pay a voluntary homage to truth, even when it makes againſt one's ſelf, argues indeed a moſt heroick greatneſs of ſoul; and yet it is ſuppoſed to be no more, in fact, than what every man who has had the advantage of a liberal education, and would be thought a gentleman, and a man of honour is indiſpenſibly obliged to; but more eſpecially that part of mankind

amongſt

amongſt us, who pique themſelves ſo much upon their honour, and look upon it as the very quinteſcence of all diſtinction from the vulgar; and yet I am afraid that, had there not been a much ſtronger principle than all this, to enforce the obligation above-mentioned, even the ſmall portion of virtue which now exiſts, would ſtill be conſiderably ſmaller than it is; for the whole force of honour, excluſive of this enlivening principle, is found to operate, at beſt, but very ſuperficially, nay is ſometimes diametrically oppoſite to virtue and common ſenſe: the bare empty name of high ſounding titles of honour, without the reality, and the appearance of doing things, however immoral in themſelves, with a certain grace, makes but too frequently an atonement, in the opinion of the polite world, for the want both of true virtue and honour; for beſides their prevailing biaſs to illicit pleaſures, the generality of people in high life are too apt to conſider ſincerity, in all who approach them, as a breach of decorum at leaſt, if not as a downright act of preſumption; and often chuſe rather to forego all the ſolid advantages of true friendſhip, and be flattered by their paſſions and ſycophants to their own deſtruction,

ſtruction, than ſubmit to hear the genuine voice of reaſon and truth.

Of this claſs was the agreeable, but greatly vicious lord Vafer mentioned above, to whoſe account the fall of Careleſs from the paths of virtue, truth and honour, and all the tedious ſcene of Portia's bitter woes is wholly to be placed; the friendſhip of this nobleman, if it deſerved to be called by ſo ſacred a name, had ſomething in the appearance of it that was too flattering to the vanity and ambition of Careleſs to be eaſily reſiſted, by a perſon of his complexion, whoſe imagination and paſſions had greatly the advantage of his judgment in point of ſtrength; not that he was naturally, or habitually addicted to any predominant vice, but ſeemed rather, 'till this unhappy period, to entertain the juſteſt ſenſe of the force of all moral obligations; but alas, this alone was not ſufficient; the charms of lord Vafer's converſation, together with the conſtant influence of ſo infectious an example, by degrees ſeduced, and at laſt intirely debauched and corrupted him, as had been the unhappy fate of many others before him; from this time he bid adieu to all conjugal and parental affection, and ſoon ſhook off all regard to reputation and common decency; he

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ſeemed, in ſhort, irrecoverably reduced to the ſubjection of vice, as if by the power of ſome extraordinary inchantment; indeed it was almoſt impoſſible for any man to eſcape the contagion of lord Vafer's vicious ſociety, when once within its reach, except he had been impregnably fortified by the principles of the goſpel, which, it is but too plain, was not the caſe with Careleſs, and therefore I think, we may certainly conclude, that this was the fatal rock whereon he ſplit: how has ſorrow ſeized my heart whenever Portia was in this part of her ſtory; but the more her virtues were tried in the fire of affliction, the more pure, like gold, ſhe ſtill emerged from thence.

CHAP. IV.

Continuation of Portia's ſtory.

TO loſe the affection of a man ſo entirely beloved, as was Careleſs, by his faithful and tender Portia, eſpecially as the whole happineſs of her life depended on its preſervation, muſt have been a trial, only fit to exerciſe ſuch virtue and fortitude as ſhe was miſtreſs of: I will ſuppoſe that Careleſs, upon his firſt deviation

ation from a regular courſe of life, might not intend to have proceeded to ſuch immoderate lengths of vice as he afterwards run into; nor to have deſignedly inflicted ſo ſevere a weight of miſery upon ſo amiable a woman, and ſo excellent a wife; but who, except the ideot, the madman, or the knave, can preſume to promiſe himſelf an exemption from the fatal conſequences of aſſociating in bad company? the path which leads to ſenſual pleaſure is always eaſy of acceſs, and ſeems as if every where ſtrewed about with flowers; the firſt advances made therein may poſſibly, to the diſſolute and thoughtleſs, be highly engaging and delightful; but upon a farther progreſs, although the ſcene be changed conſiderably for the worſe, yet a retreat from thence, like that from the lion's den, or an enemy's quarter, becomes often extremely difficult and dangerous; nay, ſuch is the infatuation which vice too frequently occaſions, that even the point of honour is made to conſiſt in not receding from thence.

The time had been, and it was but lately elapſed, when Careleſs, had he ſpent an hour out of the company of his beloved Portia, except when engaged by the unavoidable neceſſity of buſineſs, would ſenſibly have regretted it as a real loſs; now

now whole days and nights were incontinently ſacrificed to the commands of lord Vaſer, and his profligate companions; but this was not all; he generally returned home, after theſe excurſions, extremely peeviſh and out of humour, nay ſometimes moroſe, ill-natured, and downright abuſive; yet, upon all ſuch occaſions, Portia received him with her accuſtomed complacency and gentleneſs of manners, for indeed to her he was always truly welcome; and whatever pangs ſhe might ſecretly feel from ſuch cruel, ſuch ungenerous treatment, whether from the exceſs of her affection for him, or from the flattering hope of melting him into tenderneſs by the mildneſs of her addreſs; ſo it was, that not the leaſt trace of reſentment, or upbraiding for ſuch injuries, ever lowred on her brow, or appeared in any part of her behaviour; to avoid every poſſible occaſion of any thing like a ſcene of altercation, ſhe for a conſiderable time made not the leaſt enquiry into the preſent unhappy change in his temper and conduct, for fear that it might perhaps tend only to irritate him ſtill the more; ſhe rather endeavoured, in the moſt affectionate manner, to ſooth and win him over, if poſſible, to his former regularity of life, and ſerenity of mind, in hopes

that

that his own good ſenſe, after ſome intervals of reflection upon his paſt errors, might ſucceſsfully co-operate with theſe her endeavours; but this alaſs was wholly without effect, he was advanced too far to be reclaimed, in ſo much that every engaging, every perſuaſive art which the ſtrongeſt combination of virtue, beauty, ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, and good underſtanding could ſuggeſt, were all tried utterly in vain, the Power of all Portia's charms was now no more.

Added moreover to the misfortune of having thus irrecoverably loſt her huſband's affection, ſhe was ſoon obliged to experience ſtill another, and a very ſevere one too, though perhaps, in her eſtimation, it was conſiderably leſs ſo than the former; I mean the deplorable conjuncture of finding that ſhe was reduced to very narrow circumſtances for the ſubſiſtance of herſelf and children, of whom ſhe had now three: it has always been juſtly remarked, that exceſs in point of expence, and that uſually beyond the perſon's ability who is guilty of it, is the inſeparable attendant on a vicious courſe of life, and ſometimes proves likewiſe one temporal puniſhment thereof; the extravagance of Careleſs afforded a memorable inſtance to this effect; ſo long as he continued in a

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courſe of ſobriety and virtue, his fortune, his reputation, and his happineſs, even by his own confeſſion, greatly proſpered; but ſo ſoon as he had actually ſtrayed from thence, a dreadful reverſe in each of theſe began viſibly to ſucceed; and ſuch a conſequence indeed was very naturally to be expected, notwithſtanding that the intoxication of vice and riotous pleaſures may for a while obſtruct and divert the apprehenſion thereof; from hence it was, that the ſhameful neglect he was guilty of in the execution of thoſe employments which he held under the government, ſoon occaſioned his diſmiſſion from thence; nor could all the intereſt of his faſt friend lord Vafer ever procure his re-eſtabliſhment therein; one of the main ſprings therefore for the ſupply of his extravagance being thus cut off, after he had conſumed the whole of what Portia's frugality had prudently ſaved, he ſoon mortgaged his eſtate for as much as he could poſſibly borrow upon it, which however, as he ſtill ſeemed determined not to retrench in the free indulgence of his pleaſures, laſted but a little while.

Before the commencement of his acquaintance with the noble peer ſo often mentioned, notwithſtanding that he yearly laid up money, he lived in a very genteel manner,

manner, his table, his furniture and equipage had, all of them, the appearance of affluence and taſte; and this indeed might very well be, for his income, as I have before obſerved, was large; but his diſburſements on the ſcore of illicit pleaſures were from that unlucky period ſtill conſiderably more ſo; every thing, in ſhort, wherein prudence ſhould have had the direction, began now to take a retrogade courſe, which by ſwift degrees rendered him moſt ungratefully ſordid and penurious, where he ought to have been the moſt generous and kind.

In the practice of decent oeconomy, few women, I believe, ever arrived at Portia's excellence; none, I will be confident to affirm, ever exceeded her; her chief motive thereto was good, for it was that of charity joined with prudence, by no means that of avarice, and her judgment was in every reſpect equal to ſo good a motive; but as ſhe had not for ſo many years the leaſt reaſon to apprehend that ſo dreadful a viciſſitude, as was in fact now going to take place, would ever fall to her lot, ſhe was, juſt at the inſtant of its arrival, the more incapable of guarding againſt it, and had accordingly made no ſort of proviſion for the conſequences thereof; for ſhe would have eſ-

teemed it as a high breach of truſt, to have ſecretly reſerved to herſelf even ſo much as the prudence of her own frugality, after ſuch deductions were made from thence, as ſhe thought reaſonably neceſſary for the ſervice of the poor; ſhe therefore, at the end of each year, regularly preſented the ſurplus to her huſband, and in ſo doing perſuaded herſelf, that ſhe did nothing more than what her duty ſtrictly enjoined, very juſtly ſuppoſing that ſuch ſavings, properly managed, might in time help to increaſe the proviſion to be made for younger children; but in her preſent diſtreſsful ſituation, when a ſupply for even the common neceſſaries of life began to be grudgingly dealt out, if not wholly denied, ſhe had indeed but very little opportunity to exert her talents in the art of oeconomy and good management.

All this, however grievous, ſhe patiently bore without the leaſt complaint; but ſhe now began to feel another affliction, which, to her, was much more ſevere than any I have as yet mentioned; and yet it was no more than what might have been very conſiſtently expected, from the looſe kind of life which Careleſs had for ſome time led; but as ſhe had never diſcovered in him the leaſt propenſity, but rather a particular averſion, to the deſtruc-

deſtructive practice of intemperate drinking, ſhe conſequently ſuſpected not, 'till it became too notorious even for her fond incredulity, that he could ever be thus unhappily ſeduced: it helped indeed, in ſome meaſure, to account for the otherwiſe amazing irregularity which he, who before had always been remarkably prudent and ſober, was now fallen into; and who that is once irrevocably inſlaved to this almoſt worſt of all vices (ſince it is in a great meaſure an inlet to all others) can preſume to anſwer for what may happen; at leaſt till the conſciouſneſs of his having committed crimes of the deepeſt hue, ſhall perhaps arreſt him in ſome of his cooler moments of reflection.

'Tis indeed a very miſtaken kind of caſuiſtry to ſuppoſe, becauſe a premeditated intention to act wrong may, poſſibly, have no immediate ſhare in the profligate frolicks of a drunkard, that therefore he is not guilty; the very laws of the land have made it otherwiſe, and in this particular they are founded on ſuperior laws, on laws of immutable rectitude; ſuppoſe, a man, who is in poſſeſſion of the full uſe of his reaſon, ſhould wantonly take an over doſe of opium, in order to elude the more effectually for a time, what he may poſſibly think the

painful impertinence of reflection, and by this raſh act fall the victim of his own criminal indiſcretion; I ſay, whatever the fate of ſuch a perſon may be in the next world, though I preſume not even to imagine, yet certain I am, that in this, were our laws always to have their free courſe, he muſt indiſputably be treated as a ſuicide; how much leſs rigorouſly, pray then, before the period of diſſolution, ſhould the profeſſed drunkard and debauchee be treated? who, after having abſolutely renounced the uſe of reaſon, proceeds undauntedly to the deſtruction of his health, fame, life, and often to that of his family's whole ſupport; for if our intentions are at all to be regarded in our actions, as they moſt certainly are, the guilt of him, who acts wrong by voluntarily diveſting himſelf of the power of all intention to act right, is confeſſedly equal with that of him who acts intentionally wrong.

And this indeed was the unhappy caſe of Careleſs, who, whenever he happened to be invited by the example of his ſuperiors, or fired by the falſe ſpirit of Burgundy and Champaign, was guilty of many enormities, that paſſed off for the time only as ſcenes of wit and humour, the very thoughts of which he would however

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ſhudder at when ſober; yet wanted reſolution to extricate himſelf from the vile ſociety of thoſe, who daily involved him in ſuch labyrinths of wickedneſs and folly; and particularly from that of the abandoned peer already mentioned; whoſe fortune, being conſiderable, together with his rank, was, no doubt, an extraordinary encouragement, as it was likewiſe thought always a ſufficient ſecurity to indemnify the whole company for whatever outrages they might commit, excepting indeed that of murder, which they had the good fortune to avoid, and perhaps the only inſtance of falſe heroiſm they left unatchieved.

But Portia's moſt poignant affliction aroſe from the viſible havock, which ſhe obſerved to be daily making in the health of Careleſs by his continued ſcenes of debauchery; and therefore, in a matter of the laſt importance to her, as ſhe preſumed, that it was by no means inconſiſtent with the ſtricteſt obligations of her duty, ſhe at length attempted, but in the ſofteſt and moſt pathetic terms imaginable, to expoſtulate a little with him, and to convince him, if yet it was poſſible, that the irreparable deſtruction, as well of ſoul and body, as of reputation and fortune, muſt inevitably be the conſequence of per-

ſevering in the riotous courſe of life, wherein he had been for ſome time paſt engaged; that however indiſpenſible, on her part, an earlier remonſtance of this kind may ſeem to have been, ſhe had nevertheleſs carefully forborn making ſuch, from the hopes that, as heaven had bleſſed him with a ſuperior underſtanding, he would, long before this time, have diſcovered and corrected the fatal errors of his conduct; that in regard to herſelf, neither her affection nor her duty would ever ſuffer her to think amiſs of him, much leſs to upbraid or accuſe him, on account of any injuries which ſhe had either already ſuſtained, or might hereafter from his unkindneſs; that to whatever pittance he might be pleaſed to reduce her and his children, ſhe doubted not of the gracious and conſtant protection of providence towards herſelf and them; nor had ſhe now preſumed to have offered even thus much, had not her extreme tenderneſs for him, particularly in the preſent ruinous ſituation of his health, extorted it from her.

Careleſs, it muſt be owned, gave her upon this occaſion a very patient and attentive hearing, inſomuch that ſhe was inclined to believe, her ſufferings, and the delicacy with which ſhe had concealed them from the world, had at laſt touched his

his heart; but alas! the caſe was far otherwiſe; his patience proceeded rather from a thorough contempt of her, and every thing elſe that was good, than from any thing like remorſe, or an inclination to amendment; for he had long given up the reins to paſſion and appetite too freely to admit of any check or reſtraint; reaſon and judgment were not merely laid aſleep, but totally diſmiſſed from all farther attendance upon him, ſo that, in truth, Portia had not at preſent the leaſt foundation left even for hope, ſave only that imaginary one, which the unabated tenderneſs of her affection for a moſt ungrateful huſband ſtill ſuggeſted to her; and with this, forlorn as it was, ſhe continued to flatter herſelf that he might yet be reclaimed; but not the leaſt hint of his unkind behaviour ever once eſcaped her lips; her ſufferings, though highly grievous, ſhe kept intirely within her own breaſt; ſhe thought it a ſubject too ſacred to be communicated even to a mother's ear; and that it ill became a wife to be the accuſer of her own huſband.

It muſt be acknowledged indeed, that ſhe had, all this while, the heart-felt conſolation of knowing her own innocence, and that her conſcience, upon the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny ſhe could poſſibly make into her conduct, had fairly acquitted her of hav-

ing deſerved even the ſmalleſt part of all the rigorous treatment ſhe had met with; ſo that, had not her affection been thus inſeparably rivetted to her huſband, ſhe might have appeared, in one light, rather as the object of envy than compaſſion: ſhe was indeed altogether ignorant of thoſe conſolatory principles of ſtoiciſm, which are very ſucceſsfully cultivated by ſome modern wives, who, much to the honour both of their invention and reſolution, have, at all times, their affections ſo abſolutely at command, that, although their huſbands be, in diſpoſition and conduct, directly the reverſe of Careleſs, they nevertheleſs can, and frequently do, with wonderful facility and compoſure, transfer the ſame from them, perhaps to a monkey, a maſquerade, a new love, a party at cards, a cordial julep, or ſome ſuch infallible reſtorative of happineſs; and this is that ſublime fortitude, which ſo deſervedly engages the attention and admiration of moſt of our modern female ſtoicks; who muſt, it ſeems, be actually in the ſtate of wedlock, as an indiſpenſible qualification for their degree, before they can be admitted into this ſect; as it is preſumed, that otherwiſe they could not have had an opportuity of acquiring ſufficient experience to diſtinguiſh themſelves, and

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diſplay their abilities to the beſt advantage.

It is the peculiar office of this ſame ſtoical doctrine to inculcate to its profeſſors, that their ſupreme happineſs is to depend only on themſelves, and that the meaſure and degree thereof can alone be determined by the ſecret feelings of their own fair boſoms; accordingly, if all be well there, they are to think it utterly inconſiſtent with their principles, ever to be moved by any thing from without, or to ſuffer the courſe of their felicity to be diſturbed by any thing ſo triffling as conjugal or parental affections; ſo that although they may poſſibly love their huſbands, and that to no ſmall degree, they yet can very philoſophically ſacrifice that paſſion at will, and become inſtantly above every ſenſation of anxiety or pain, that can ariſe from their reſentment, indignation, or ill uſage: hence every object that excites terror, compaſſion, or any other diſagreeable emotion in their tender breaſts, is abſolutely to be rejected as foreign to their ſyſtem; and on the contrary, every object that is capable of communicating pleaſure, which is their chief good, is as eaſily adopted into it: their happineſs, therefore, being thus wrapped up wholly in themſelves, the opinion of the world

is no otherwiſe regarded by them, than merely as it happens to coincide with their own; they think, in fact, exactly with the philoſopher, that the titles and diſtinctions of life, together with the opinion of the world, are altogether ſuperficial, no more than the mere ſcenes of a drama, calculated to amuſe a mixed multitude; and conſequently that none can ſtrictly be allowed to act their parts well, however they may perhaps be applauded by the audience for ſo doing, if their performance tends, in any degree, to violate that ſupreme bliſs, of which themſelves muſt always be admitted as the propereſt judges, as they can only be ſuppoſed to feel it.

That this however was a ſpecies of fortitude and female heroiſm, of which Portia had not the leaſt idea, will, I believe, very ſufficiently appear in the following part of her ſtory.

CHAP. V.

Continuation of Portia's ſtory to the death of Careleſs, with ſome occaſional reflections.

IT has been remarked from time immemorial, and I think not unjuſtly, that good fortune, from the flattering expectation of its producing certain happineſs, has

has in all ages been the ſupreme goddeſs, to whom the generality of mankind have chiefly paid their adorations; I am therefore the more apprehenſive that my opinion may, on that account, appear ſomewhat ſingular, when I aſſert, that it is adverſity alone, if borne with propriety and true magnanimity, which places the grandeur of the human ſoul in it's moſt diſtinguiſhed point of light, and renders the real merit of mankind truly conſpicuous, while proſperity tends for the moſt part but to darken and obſcure it's luſtre: this, like a falſe witneſs, dealing much in miſrepreſentation and deception, endeavours gradually to invert the natural conſtitution and ſettled order of things, and too frequently ſucceeds in throwing a ſpurious glory round the ſheltered vice and real meanneſs of many of it's votaries.

From hence it is that I deduce the opinion above-mentioned, an opinion founded upon long obſervation, and ſome ſhare of experience, and therefore I cannot help concluding, that proſperity, eſpecially when abuſed, which is but too often the caſe, darts forth ſtings, that are in fact infinitely ſharper than thoſe of adverſity, and ſuch as put the ſoul to a much ſeverer and more fatal trial; for proſperity,

by attacking the mind ſecretly, and as it were by almoſt imperceptible degrees, diſarms it effectually of all it's native and auxiliary force, infuſes into it a poiſon by ſo much the more dangerous, as it is always the more ſubtle, and leaves it thus an eaſy prey to the violence of it's own paſſions: few people, indeed, whom I have ever had the honour of knowing, how deſervedly ſoever they may be applauded for other kinds of merit, have yet had heads ſufficiently ſtrong, and hearts at the ſame time ſufficiently humble and humane, to manage proſperity as they ought; few of whom, it may be juſtly ſaid, they bore their dignity with ſo much meekneſs: whereas, in truth, adverſity acts the part of a moſt ſincere and faithful friend, it's intention in the very infliction of pain being to adminiſter comfort; at leaſt, if ever it be a real foe, it is an open and a generous one; if it puniſhes vice and folly, 'tis only becauſe they are the avowed enemies of virtue and wiſdom, and conſequently enemies to the true happineſs of mankind; or if it ſometimes tries even that virtue itſelf, 'tis but in order to make it triumph ſtill the more: in ſhort, like an honeſt and a ſkilful phyſician, it ingenuouſly declares the true ſtate of the mind's diſorder, and preſcribes at the

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ſame time an infallible remedy for it, except the patient's obſtinacy defeats the cure, and deſervedly enhances thereby his own miſery.

It was however to a diſpoſition, in every reſpect the reverſe of this latter, adorned with conſcious innocence, with reſignation, humility, and meekneſs; but above all, with the great inſtructive truths of religion, which ſo emphatically inculcate theſe virtues; to this, I ſay, it was, that Portia was principally indebted for whatever conſolation ſhe received under the ſevere preſſure of her preſent injuries, which were indeed almoſt intolerable, but then by patiently ſubmitting to the inflicting hand of heaven ſhe ſecured in the main ſuch real advantages, as, without doubt, are always intended to be produced from thence, yet ſuch as can only fall to the lot of the truly humble ſpirit.

One unhappy effect indeed of her affliction, how heroically ſoever ſhe bore it otherwiſe, was, that by it's preying moſt ſeverely upon her health and ſpirits, it became involuntarily too apparent in her countenance to be longer concealed from her friends; this the affectionate Lucia had for ſome time beheld with much concern, and had occaſionally hinted it to her daughter, who, to avoid all further ex-

planation upon the ſubject, generally choſe to turn the diſcourſe, and aſſured her mother, that ſhe was perfectly well; but Lucia, obſerving that her malady, whatever it was, began of late to increaſe ſtill faſter, was now filled with the moſt alarming apprehenſions, that her daughter was falling into an incureable conſumption; and though I believe no human creature ever adored truth more ſincerely than Portia did, yet rather than Careleſs, with all his faults, ſhould ſuffer in the opinion of her friends, ſhe ſcrupled not, for the preſent, to let the above deception paſs upon them.

To thoſe, who eſtimate the ſtrength and value of the human underſtanding, only in proportion to the ſucceſs of it's intereſted views, this muſt certainly appear as an unpardonable weakneſs in Portia; but without attempting to account for it by the peculiar ſoftneſs of her diſpoſition, the tenderneſs of her heart, or her unalterable affection for her huſband, I ſhall beg leave to aſſure them that ſhe was gifted, not only with ſagacity and judgment, but with a ſtrength of reſolution, far beyond any other of her ſex whom I ever was acquainted with; the truth of which aſſertion was abundantly confirmed by the ſeverity of her ſufferings, and particularly

ticularly by her manner of bearing them. The unkind, nay, baſe behaviour of Careleſs towards her would, no doubt, in the opinion of the world, have juſtified a very different conduct on her part; but ſhe regulated not the ſentiments of her heart, nor the dictates of her conſcience, by the faſhionable, or prevailing opinion of the world in ſuch caſes; ſhe had recourſe to a ſuperior direction; 'tis true, the only perſon from whom her wrongs proceeded was, to his unſpeakable infamy and guilt, her huſband; he was, moreover, the man whom ſhe tenderly and ſincerely loved; he treated her with the utmoſt ingratitude and inhumanity, which, by degrees, neceſſarily muſt, and doubtleſs did, abate the ardor of her affection; but ſhe ſtill conſidered him as her huſband, and the father of her children, againſt whom the law of retaliation, in this caſe, or the practice of any kind of revenge, notwithſtanding the numberleſs precedents exhibited by the polite world on ſuch occaſions, was by no means to be executed; the tenets of her ſyſtem, however obſolete at preſent they may ſeem, did utterly forbid it.

She wanted not indeed that quickneſs and ſenſibility, in regard to the wrongs ſhe ſuſtained, which ſo inſtantly impel the injured to ſeek redreſs; and this it was

that gave the keeneſt edge, and a redou bled force to all her afflictions; but then the ſolemn vows ſhe plighted at the altar were, in her opinion, too ſacred to admit of any relaxation; the more injurious the cruelty of Careleſs appeared to her, and the more criminal his infidelity, the leſs ſurely muſt it have afforded, to a perſon of her diſpoſition and rectitude of princi-ple, an example that was by any means proper for her imitation; and therefore ſhe could not help looking upon every overture of redreſs, that was to be ob-tained at the ſhocking price of publiſhing her huſband's diſhonour, as an actual violation, in ſome degree of thoſe her nuptial vows, and which, inſtead of ad-miniſtering any relief to her, would cer-tainly have proved a high aggravation of her ſufferings; ſo that in this deplorable ſituation, patience, ſubmiſſion, and the conſcious approbation of her own heart, made up the whole of her reſource.

But though ſhe concealed all this as carefully as poſſible from every body, and particularly from her own family, it can-not reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that her bro-ther, who lived conſtantly in London, could be an entire ſtranger to it, nor was he, for he had, it ſeems, been faithfully and minutely informed, though not a great

great while before, of all the profligate proceedings of Careleſs, yet, for fear of ſhortening, by the cruel recital, even the ſmall remaining period of a fond mother's life, who was now very far advanced in years, he purpoſely ſuppreſſed it for a while, and particularly, as he was not altogether without hopes, that the advice and remonſtrances of friends might at length recover this man to a ſenſe of juſtice, of virtue, and of honour; but alas, the certainty of ſome accounts which he had lately heard had now entirely removed every expectation of that kind; for Careleſs, when he had riotouſly conſumed, amidſt the moſt diſſolute and abandoned of both ſexes, all the money he could poſſibly raiſe on his eſtate, or borrow from his friends, was under a neceſſity, as his laſt reſource, of throwing himſelf wholly upon lord Vafer's protection, whoſe behaviour, on this occaſion, was indeed a faithful repreſentation of the common friendſhip of the great, to ſuch at leaſt of their companions in iniquity, as happen not to be upon a level with them in point of fortune, for except in this laſt particular, and that of being moſt tranſcendently vicious, Careleſs, it muſt be allowed, was in every other reſpect greatly lord Vafer's ſuperior.

But

But friendſhip of this kind, founded for the moſt part merely in vice, and a mutual concurrence in libertine principles, as it can only be ſupported by the power of indulging theſe, ſo muſt it always ceaſe with the extinction of that power; and ſo indeed it happened here, for when his lordſhip found himſelf thus likely to be ſaddled with the incumbrance of an impoveriſhed friend, a friend too, reduced at this time both to beggary and infamy, and that in a manner wholly by his lordſhip's influence and example, he ſoon deviſed the moſt effectual means to get rid of him at the ſmalleſt expence to himſelf which he poſſibly could; and this he accompliſhed, by exerting his intereſt to procure him ſome ſmall commiſſion in one of the Engliſh regiments which were then abroad; for even this monſter, by the mere credit of a large eſtate, ſtill preſerved an intereſt with the higher powers, and what is yet more extraordinary, had the modeſty to receive, as of right, that deference and reſpect, which is only due to virtuous and honourable characters.

But the diſtreſsful condition of Careleſs, and his affairs at this time, no more than lord Vafer's great generoſity in taking advantage thereof, would decently admit of any expoſtulation upon the merit

rit of this ſingular inſtance of his lordſhip's friendſhip; there was, in ſhort, no other alternative, either Careleſs muſt now thankfully comply with this generous propoſal of his lordſhip, or never more preſume to ſee his face: a ſtroke ſo unexpected as this, filled Careleſs with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment; but it inſtantly laid open to his view, though for the firſt time, the whole fund of baſeneſs and vice that occupied lord Vafer's heart, as likewiſe the egregious folly and enormity of his own conduct; and thoroughly convinced him, though now alas too late, of the unpardonable vanity of aſpiring at the friendſhip or ſociety of our ſuperiors, except when we have the ſtrongeſt proofs that the baſis thereof is abſolutely laid in virtue: he however had at preſent but very little time allowed him for reflection, and therefore without farther heſitation accepted his lordſhip's offer; but then it was, in fact, more from a ſudden ſtart of deſperation than choice, being covered over with confuſion and indignation againſt the man who had firſt ſeduced him from the happy paths of virtue and honour, to thoſe of infamy and ruin; and not only ſo, but had reduced him likewiſe from a ſtate of opulence, to the ſad neceſſity of being now meanly

meanly obliged to him for a poor ſubſiſtance.

And yet his indignation was ſtill more keenly pointed againſt himſelf, when he conſidered how irreparably he was become the dupe of his own folly: to have called lord Vafer to account, in an honourable way, as the phraſe is, which Careleſs, who by no means wanted ſpirit, was by a violent tranſport of paſſion prompted to do, would indeed have been a moſt unpardonable aggravation of his other crimes; though ridding the world of ſuch a wretch might probably have proved an advantage to many people, but ſome few, who were yet his real friends, diſſuaded him wholly from ſuch a raſh attempt: as ſoon therefore as he had received his commiſſion from the bounteous hand of his noble patron, he declared that he would inſtantly ſet out for the army, and bid adieu to England, perhaps for ever, as indeed it afterwards proved; he accordingly ſent to his houſe for whatever cloaths or other neceſſaries might be wanting in this expedition, but without giving his wife the leaſt hint of his intentions; deterred, no doubt, by the cowardice of a guilty conſcience, from appearing before that virtuous, that affectionate wife, and thoſe innocent children, whom he had ſo cruelly

cruelly injured: and happy it was for Portia, that an interview did not take place, which, conſidering the preſent miſerable dejection of her ſpirits, muſt in all probability have been fatal to her; ſo that ſhe remained for ſome time wholly ignorant in regard to this laſt reſolution of his, it having been lately no uncommon practice with him to be abſent from his family for ſeveral weeks together, without ever vouchſafing to communicate the leaſt account of himſelf, and therefore his abſence at preſent ſeemed to have nothing in it that was extraordinary enough to alarm Portia's fears; who, by his continued ill treatment of her, and utter neglect of his children, as likewiſe by the preſſing remonſtrances of her brother, was now endeavouring, as much as ſhe poſſibly could, to diveſt herſelf of all remains of tenderneſs for a man ſo entirely unworthy of it.

Tradewell, whoſe great affection for his ſiſter had long made him extremely anxious for the re-eſtabliſhment of her happineſs and peace, and conſequently extremely watchful of her huſband's conduct, had ſoon learned a particular account of his departure from England, together with the occaſion and extraordinary manner thereof, but judged it highly improper,

at the time, to give her any information of it; as he well knew that it would prove a ſource of laſting anguiſh to her; for a conſiderable time therefore he prudently ſuppreſſed the moſt diſagreeable circumſtances of that tranſaction, nor was ſhe acquainted therewith, till many years after the deceaſe of Careleſs; who, notwithſtanding the ſolemn promiſes he had made to ſome of his friends, that he would inſtantly leave England, upon their aſſiſting him with a preſent ſupply of caſh for that purpoſe, ſeemed nevertheleſs ſtill inclined to loiter here, with a view only to indulge in the ſame ſad round of criminal exceſſes, which from habit were now become irreſiſtible to him; as if he had been reſolutely bent upon his own deſtruction; but a poſitive order from the war-office, requiring all abſent officers, upon pain of being caſhiered, to repair immediately to their reſpective regiments, haſtened on his departure much ſooner than he either wiſhed or intended; yet ſuch was his infatuation, ſo irrecoverable an aſcendant had vice now gained over him, that of thoſe abandoned creatures, who ſcarcely deſerve the name of women, and who, it muſt be obſerved, had a conſiderable ſhare in the accompliſhment of his ruin here, of theſe, I ſay, he ſelected ſome of the very worſt, to accompany

pany him in his expedition, in order to ſoften the fatigues and toils of his campaign; where, in the continued purſuit of diſeaſe and infamy, rather than of glory and preferment, I ſhall leave him for a while, and, in conſequence of this his final ſeparation from his wife and native country, as it happened, give my readers what farther related to her.

The amiable, but highly injured Portia, though ſhe had at firſt flattered herſelf with the pleaſing hopes of Careleſs's reformation, was, nevertheleſs, for ſome time paſt, ſtrongly induced to apprehend, from his ſad and obſtinate perſeverance in vice, that no ſuch proſperous event was now ever likely to take place; and in this her ſhocking apprehenſion how fatally alas was ſhe confirmed, when informed by her brother of his actual departure from England, and likewiſe of the dreadful ſituation to which he had abandoned both her and his children; without the leaſt proviſion being made for their preſent ſubſiſtance, or indeed for their future, in caſe of his death, more than the ſcanty one of her ſmall jointure: his eſtate, which was afterwards found to have been mortgaged over and over to different perſons for conſiderably more than it was worth, had long been in the poſſeſſion of creditors, ſo that nothing

was

was to be expected from thence; and, what was ſtill worſe than this, Portia's marriage ſettlement, which, from the beginning thro' a moſt fatal miſtake, was ſuffered to remain in the hands of one of his creatures, as truſtee, who died about this time, full as inſolvened as his friend; this, I ſuppoſe, Careleſs had obtained from him, and either gave it up to ſome of his creditors, as a ſtill ſtronger ſecurity for their demands, or elſe he abſolutely deſtroyed it, for it was now no where to be found, which would inevitably render even that ſmall income greatly precarious after his deceaſe, as in fact it accordingly did; for in a few months after his departure from England, there came a certain account of his death, that ſoon brought this whole matter to light.

His death happened not indeed to be in the bed of honour, as might have been wiſhed by his Friends, although it muſt be allowed, that cowardice was not to be reckoned amongſt the number of his faults; but the truth is, he had, as yet, met with no opportunity of diſtinguiſhing his courage, there having been no engagement with the enemy ſince he had joined the army: in ſhort, this poor unhappy man died an inflexible martyr to that intemperance, from which no conſideration whatever

ever, no connections of the deareſt, the tendereſt Kind, had Power to reclaim him; his health, through repeated exceſſes, was greatly impaired when he left England, which, I ſuppoſe, his uſual manner of living in a camp did not tend much to rectify.

But it now became abſolutely neceſſary to acquaint Portia with this event, who received the account of it with that ſettled melancholy and reſignation, which a long ſucceſſive train of afflictions had habitually inured her to; tho' few wives, I believe, particularly of her merit, had ever been more ſeverely injured than herſelf, yet was ſhe never once known to utter the leaſt reviling or vindictive exclamation againſt Careleſs, either before or after his death; 'tis contrary indeed to every ſuggeſtion, both of reaſon and of love, to ſuppoſe, that this laſt incident, melancholy as it may ſeem, could now prove any extraordinary aggravation of her miſery; his long continued, relentleſs inhumanity to her effectually prevented it; but ſtill it ſerved to redouble, if poſſible, the tenderneſs of her compaſſion and affection for his guiltleſs children.

However, in a few months after her huſband's deceaſe, upon application for the payment of her jointure, as ſhe could not

not produce the deed of ſettlement by which it was ſecured, her title to it was ſtrongly diſputed; but not to enter into a particular detail of that troubleſome affair, after a fruitleſs and perplexing ſcene of litigation, ſhe was by the ingenious letter of the law moſt equitably deprived of the whole: but alas, this was not all, for, as if it had been intended to reduce this highly injured woman, and her helpleſs little family to the laſt extremity of diſtreſs, a number of unappeaſable creditors, who had no other probable expedient for the recovery of their juſt demands, moſt mercileſsly fell upon the little perſonal eſtate which ſtill remained, and, in order to fill up the meaſure of her misfortunes, tore away from her all the plate and furniture of her houſe, all her perſonal ornaments and moveables, and in ſhort every thing elſe that belonged to her, excepting literally the cloaths that were on her back.

Upon this truly deplorable occaſion, as it generally happens in ſuch caſes, ſhe was inſtantly deſerted by that whole motley tribe, who are wont, for a certain period, to aſſume the title of friends, but whom I call only faſhionable intruders; for friends, according to the true import of that ſacred character, they never could have been, not-

notwithſtanding all the ardour of their former profeſſions; mere ſummer-flies, that teize and ſtun you with impertinence and noiſe, but vaniſh at the firſt approach of winter: for in the gay ſeaſon of Portia's proſperity, which to the world's appearance was but juſt elapſed, although ſhe had been univerſally eſteemed as a pattern of merit to her own ſex, and an object every way worthy of admiration by the other, inſomuch, that in the female world, in order to riſe to ſuch a degree of fame, as might juſtly claim the approbation of the virtuous and the wiſe, it needed only to be known, that the candidate was honoured with Portia's friendſhip; yet ſo it fell out, that like the bloom of a ſhort-lived flower, her every excellence ſeemed at once to vaniſh and decay: it fares ſometimes with friendſhip, as it ſometimes doth with love, for friends as well as lovers are known to be capricious and inconſtant; nor will it, I believe, be denied, that misfortune, how inevitably ſoever it may have happened, as often proves the fatal enemy of virtue and merit, as age or the ſmall pox can be of beauty.

If the breaſt of a ſincere friend would have been keenly affected, as no doubt it would, on beholding the once amiable

Portia

Portia thus ready to ſink beneath the weight of ſuch unmerited calamities, how conſummately baſe and mean muſt have been the ſouls of thoſe pretended friends, ſurrounded, as many of them were, with the full tide of affluence and honours, who oft had boaſted of deriving happineſs from her, and yet could view the preſent ſhocking ſcene without a ſigh, much leſs without any of thoſe finer feelings of the uncorrupted heart, which ſympathy always ſo ſtrongly ſuggeſts in favour of the wretched; but alas, what are the difficulties and misfortunes of the virtuous to thoſe who are hackneyed down in all the ways of luxury and pleaſure; whoſe minds, from a long habitual averſion to pain of every kind, but particularly to that of pitying the diſtreſſed, are become quite callous and inſenſible to all the tender callings of humanity: a ſtate of plenitude, like this, 'tis true, can leave them very little to wiſh, but then it leaves them much to fear, ſo much, that even grandeur itſelf, I doubt, doth ſometimes loſe it charms; tired with the ſame reiterated round of pomp, of pageantry, and pleaſure, the jaded ſpirits flag, the ſenſes by ſatiety loſe all the quickneſs of their functions, the mind remains unbleſſed, and even time is condemned for having

having nothing new to offer: if they happen upon any occaſion, to look into their own breaſts, they ſoon diſcover there a horrid void, an utter deſtitution of every real joy, becauſe they meet with nothing that can bear reflection; yet ſtill reflection will intrude, in ſpight of all their efforts to prevent it, and, like the ghoſt of ſome departed, highly injured friend, will haunt and terrify them through all the calmer moments of receſs; this by degrees ſoon palls the high-felt reliſh for enjoyment, imbitters every potion of delight, and makes the world appear to them a joyleſs and deteſted ſcene; hence oft the ſad precipitate retreat from life; all ſenſe of virtue and religion being once effaced, pride and falſe heroiſm with greater confidence ſuggeſt the friendly piſtol, or the laudanum, as the laſt, and only decent relief in ſuch a caſe, to which a man of ſpirit ſhould ever deign to have recourſe.

But it is time that I ſhould leave moralizing, at leaſt upon ſo dreadful a ſubject, and return to the afflicted Portia; to whom, as ſhe hath ſince often aſſured me, religion afforded the only real comfort and ſupport that ſhe was capable of feeling, under the complicated variety of woes with which ſhe was oppreſſed: what I have hitherto given of her ſtory, I affirm to be

ſtrictly true; but there are many more circumſtances yet behind, which would exhibit ſuch amazing inſtances of diſtreſs, and at the ſame time ſuch amazing inſtances of fortitude in ſurmounting them, as would raiſe her character ſtill conſiderably higher; but the fear of giving offence to ſome perſons who are now alive lays me under a neceſſity of ſuppreſſing this part, however advantageous the recital might have been to her: the only farther remark, which, for the reaſon juſt aſſigned, I ſhall preſume to make upon the conduct of Careleſs, is, that it ought to be the firſt and conſtant point of ambition, nay the inſeparable characteriſtick of every man, who is well born and well educated, to diſtinguiſh himſelf as much as poſſible from the illiterate vulgar, in every article of his behaviour; and always to remember that the pleaſures of ſenſe, how allowable ſoever they may ſeem by nature, are ſtill to be conſidered reſtrictively as the pleaſures of a gentleman, a rational creature, and a chriſtian.

It was indeed a peculiar bleſſing for Portia, that, through all the different parts of her education, the unerring and truly conſoling principles of the goſpel, in all their genuine purity, had ſo ſucceſsfully been blended with the leſs important,

though neceſſary accompliſhments of her perſon, that while her underſtanding was by degrees ripening into maturity, her conviction, her faith, and her obedience, were at the ſame time becoming inflexibly eſtabliſhed: ſhe therefore, in her preſent unhappy circumſtances, punctually practiſed, as ſhe had learned from thence, an unreſerved ſubmiſſion to the divine will in all its various diſpenſations; ſhe even practiſed, with ſucceſs, the hardeſt leſſon to be learned in this life, the pardoning of injuries unprovoked, and the ſubduing her own paſſions: the great advantage of patience in affliction, but particularly the conſideration of its being her duty, ſoon reconciled the difficulty of her ſubmiſſion; and however painful in the operation this may be, it nevertheleſs effectually calmed that diſquietude and perturbation of her mind, which otherwiſe might have proved intolerable; by perſeverance it gradually ſoftened all the ſeeming rigour of her fate, and communicated, at leaſt, ſuch an inward tranquility and compoſure, as the world, with all its charms, was incapable of affording her: it may, in ſhort, be affirmed with truth, that the ſchool of virtue and religion had ſo thoroughly prepared her for the diſcipline of affliction, that all the violence of the latter, without eſſentially

injuring her, had only given her an opportunity of doing ſtill greater honour to the former.

In this ſchool it was, that ſhe acquired the whole compaſs of that coſmetic art, which, from the ſucceſs of her example, I would endeavour to recommend to the practice of my fair country-women; though I would, at the ſame time, by no means be underſtood to inſinuate, that it can only be obtained at the ſevere expence of ſuffering the ſame misfortunes which fell to her lot; ſuch a condition, if abſolutely inſeparable from thence, would indeed be truly diſcouraging and frightful; but that is altogether uncertain, and merely accidental; yet, amidſt the various, but complicated diſtributions of good and evil, with which infinite wiſdom ſees fit to exerciſe his rational creatures, if what we call misfortune be appointed as our portion, as the particular ſpecies of our trial here, it is ſurely no inconſiderable advantage to be able to acquit ourſelves with that propriety, that decency of merit, which becomes the rank we hold amongſt intelligent beings.

It is however the peculiar efficacy of the art I am now recommending, not only to communicate and heighten beauty, but likewiſe to alleviate all the wayward miſeries of life, and to ſweeten, in a high

degree, the utmoſt bitterneſs of affliction: in favour therefore of an art, (if it deſerves not a better name) that on ſo many accounts is extremely deſireable in itſelf, I do moſt earneſtly addreſs my fair readers, on whoſe inauſpicious frown, or bliſs-creating ſmile, depends the fate of every fine gentleman in Britain; let their all-powerful influence then, as moſt undoubtedly it may, be ſtrenuouſly exerted to reſcue the profligate lover from his apoſtacy; let this but once be made the invariable condition of his ſucceſs, and the triumph of love and beauty will ſoon become conducive to the interſts of religion and virtue; this is the happy art of charming in the trueſt ſenſe.

* So have I ſeen ſome lovely nymph draw nigh,
Peace in her air, perſuaſion in her eye;
Victorious tenderneſs, it all o'ercame;
Huſbands look'd mild, and ſavages grew tame.

It is only vice invincible that ſtupidly reſiſts the power of this perſuaſive art; and

† What is vice? mere want of compaſs in our thought;
Religion what? the proof of common ſenſe.

* Dr. *Young*'s Univ. Paſſ. † Dr. *Young*'s Night-Thoughts.

CHAP. VI.

Continuation of Portia's ſtory, with ſome farther account of Machaon.

AMIDST the multitude of Portia's calamities, the reduction of her fortune, though a circumſtance in itſelf extremely ſevere, was however by no means the moſt afflictive of thoſe that ſhe felt; the cruel diſappointment ſhe had met with in the man ſhe tenderly loved, and whom, with the joint approbation of all her friends, ſhe had choſen preferably to all others, was infinitely more ſo; the total deſtruction of that plan of rational felicity which ſhe had ſo fondly propoſed to herſelf, and which indeed, from the flattering experience of ſome few years, ſhe had the ſtrongeſt preſumption to believe was neither imaginary nor impracticable, proved now a ſubject of reflection pregnant with miſery and anguiſh: alas! what a falling off was here! and yet, the conſideration of Careleſs's incorrigible propenſity to debauchery and vice of almoſt every kind, the ſad concluſion of his miſ-ſpent life, without the leaſt ſymptom of remorſe, as it enforced, beyond all other circumſtances, the dreadful cauſe, ſo did it enhance the degree of her affliction, and rendered her

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in a manner utterly incapable of reliſhing again the happineſs of this life, ſuppoſing even that the means thereof had ſtill been in her power.

The welfare of her children indeed was now the only object that ſeemed to be of conſequence enough to fix her attention any longer here; for, this circumſtance abſtracted, the world and all its vain allurements, to her, were rather painful than agreeable, and ſo far from affording any thing like an adequate compenſation for the injuries ſhe had ſuſtained, and the happineſs ſhe had loſt, that, at preſent, her inclination and taſte for the enjoyment of the latter were greatly indiſpoſed, if not totally deſtroyed by the unabated rigor of the former: in regard therefore merely to herſelf, the ſame ſad ſeries of unhappy events, that had ſo cruelly deprived her even of hope (the laſt endearing friend that ever deſerts us in the hour of adverſity) had in a great meaſure likewiſe, as if by a kind of melancholy ſtupefaction, delivered her at preſent from all the poignant agonies of ſuſpence and fear; for ſhe had been ſo thoroughly inured to the diſcipline of affliction, that future evils now loſt all the power of alarming her apprehenſion before they arrived, or indeed of terrifying and diſmaying her whenever they did:

misfortune, in ſhort, ſeemed to have diſcharged againſt her ſome of the ſharpeſt arrows in its whole quiver, and the bitterneſs of what ſhe had experienced did eaſily incline her to believe, the worſt that in all probability could befal her was already paſt, and to imagine that worldly happineſs, unfitted as ſhe was for its enjoyment, had now nothing better to beſtow on her, than a mere dead calm of indifference, at beſt a kind of ſtupid freedom from bodily pain, a ſtate of reſt inſipid.

In ſo wretched a ſituation as the preſent, the only proſpect of immediate relief that ſhe could hope for in this world was from the friendſhip of her brother Charles Tradewell, for by all others ſhe was utterly deſerted; and, to do him no more than ſtrict juſtice, I cannot but acknowledge, that it was exerted in a manner that did the higheſt honour to his virtue; with all that anxious tenderneſs and aſſiduity which the piety of an affectionate brother, and the ſenſibility of a heart replete with benevolence, can never fail to ſuggeſt: indeed throughout the whole courſe of her ſevereſt ſufferings he never deſerted her; and had it not been for his unwearied offices of kindneſs and pecuniary aſſiſtance, the delicacy of her tender frame muſt ſoon have inevitably ſunk beneath the preſſure of thoſe very

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ſufferings, in ſpight of all the ſtrongeſt efforts of a mind collected within itſelf, and armed with ſuch a degree of conſtancy and fortitude as very few of her own ſex, I believe, have ever exceeded: but with whatever trials providence was at any time pleaſed to exerciſe her, ſuch was her ſubmiſſive confidence and unalterable perſeverance in the paths of virtue, that although ſhe was humbled and greatly afflicted, yet was ſhe never once abandoned to murmuring or deſpair.

However, in the houſe of this truly affectionate brother ſhe at length found a peaceful aſylum and ſafe protection from all outrages, which either the malice, ingratitude, or iniquity of mankind could farther intend or execute againſt her; as likewiſe a comfortable reception for her helpleſs injured offspring: her brother Tradewell, very happily for her, continued ſtill unmarried, and the venerable Lucia was at this time ſo far advanced in age, and its attendant infirmities, as to be incapable of coming out of her chamber, ſo that the true ſtate of Portia's misfortunes, an account whereof would in all likelihood have proved fatal to her mother, was by this means the more eaſily concealed from her knowledge.

It muſt be remarked, to the diſtinction of Tradewell's character, that the far greateſt part of his felicity conſiſted in ſuccouring the diſtreſſed; which, in a ſtate of opulence, like his, I do preſume, would be much more generally the caſe, than what we obſerve it is, did the mind's firſt biaſs in favour of virtue continue ſtill unwarped and unſeduced by the powers of avarice, ambition, and other wayward paſſions; and yet, I apprehend, it can only be by the influence and exerciſe of ſuch a diſpoſition, that we are to underſtand the full ſcope and true import of the following beautiful Aphoriſm of Mr. *Pope*;

Thus God and nature linked the general frame,
And bade ſelf-love and ſocial be the ſame.

for moſt undoubtedly the pleaſure of giving comfort to the needy and oppreſſed, of lighting up the countenance of the afflicted into ſmiles of joy and gladneſs, though it be a pleaſure only to the benevolent few, unknown to the generality of mankind, and conſequently muſt ſeem an act ſo ſtrangely diſintereſted, as to be without the leaſt proſpect of any return, is nevertheleſs, according to this rule, and in fact, the very quinteſſence and luxury of ſelf-love; nor does the overgrown capital

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of the uſurer more infallibly produce an accumulation of intereſt at certain ſtated periods, than this virtue of the charitable man does a manifold increaſe of happineſs upon every ſerious moment of reflection.

Tradewell, it muſt be owned, had in his widowed ſiſter and her children the moſt favourable opportunity that could poſſibly offer for exerciſing the benevolence of his heart; and it muſt at the ſame time be acknowledged that he as readily embraced it; nor did he ever ſecretly repine, from an apprehenſion that his fortune was by ſuch an incumbrance the more liable to be injured or impaired; for, in regard to the true end of riches, he was uſed to reaſon much in the ſame manner as is deſcribed in the following lines of doctor Young, and always to act in ſtrict conformity to ſuch reaſoning:

* Fortune is famous for her numbers ſlain,
The number ſmall which happineſs can bear;
Though various for a while their fates, at laſt
One curſe involves them all; at death's approach
All read their riches backward into loſs,
And mourn in juſt proportion to their ſtore.

* *Young*'s Night-Thoughts

It may indeed with great truth be ſaid of Tradewell, that when the eye ſaw him, it bleſſed him, and when the ear heard him, it gave teſtimony unto him; he followed the wiſe man's advice, by giving to the poor he lent unto the Lord, and no more doubted the ſecurity, than I do the certainty of his receiving millions in return for his mite ſo lent: he was indeed a guardian angel to the wretched Portia, or rather the beneficent inſtrument, in the hand of providence, to ſave her, after ſo many repeated trials of her virtue, from the laſt extremity of diſtreſs.

Amongſt the many virtues that adorned the life of this truly amiable woman, I muſt do her the juſtice to affirm, that gratitude was by no means wanting; indeed her true character is beſt delineated by conceiving a ſtrong aſſemblage of all the virtues concentering in her, and operating with an influence to be compared to nothing more appoſitely than to the ſcattered rays of the ſun collected into a focus; if any ſhone forth more conſpicuouſly than the reſt, charity, humility, and juſtice, were always ſure to be diſtinguiſhed; yet gratitude, as I have juſt obſerved, was never wanting, and could her's have poſſibly been greater than what it was, I believe ſhe would ſtill have thought it much too ſmall for the preſent occaſion. There

There is no doubt to be made, that on a good mind, the ſenſe of benefits received will always make a deep and laſting impreſſion; from whence many people are precipitately led to infer, that every ſpecious appearance of gratitude is a certain indication of ſuch a diſpoſition; and yet I have often, from cloſe obſervation, been almoſt perſuaded to think, that what has commonly paſſed for gratitude in ſome perſons, whoſe other virtues have been by no means anſwerable to that, was in fact nothing more than the mere external ſign thereof, a certain conſtitutional facility of expreſſion, at beſt perhaps but intereſted and political; but this virtue in Portia was owing to a much nobler motive; ſhe conſidered it as a branch of juſtice, whoſe obligations, though not immediately comprized within the letter of the law, ſhe nevertheleſs held to be ſacred and inviolable: Whenever a reciprocation of benefits, in kind, was either not in her power, or not expected to be made, ſhe at leaſt thought the remembrance thereof ſhould never be effaced; and, ſo far as the delicacy of munificence would admit of it, ſhe thought even verbal acknowledgement, upon all proper occaſions, and an aſſiduous perſeverance in every friendly office, a duty altogether indiſpenſible.

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The praiſe of gratitude, as a ſtrong incentive to the practice of it, has indeed run very high in the eſtimation of all ages; and we particularly collect from ſome of the moſt authentick records of antient hiſtory, that, of all the virtues, this was advanced to hold the firſt rank of precedence amongſt the Egyptians, who were univerſally allowed, at leaſt till the period of their degeneracy into downright barbariſm and idolatry, to be a very learned and ſagacious people: and certainly the glory they derived from thus cultivating and encouraging a conſtant principle of gratitude amongſt all degrees of men, as I am to ſuppoſe that it proceeded from a moſt laudable motive, affords the cleareſt demonſtration of their wiſdom, as it abundantly proves how well calculated their government muſt have been to promote the true happineſs of ſociety; ſince, without all doubt, a mutual intercourſe of benefits, which yet, excluſive of gratitude, can never be ſupported, is the ſtrongeſt band of amity and concord, both publick and private, that can poſſibly ſubſiſt amongſt mankind; from whoſe obligations the prince himſelf is no more exempt than the beggar; for although the latter, thro' indigence or other misfortunes, may actually be incapable of keeping up ſuch an inter-

intercourſe in kind, he is nevertheleſs indiſpenſibly tied down to the practice of gratitude in ſome degree, that the merit of every beneficent action may be rewarded, if not by an adequate remuneration, at leaſt with ſuch complacency and ſatisfaction of mind, as may help to preſerve a conſtant diſpoſition towards benevolence, which flagrant inſtances of ingratitude are ſometimes too apt to extinguiſh.

But if the reaſon of this connection between munificence and gratitude, as reſulting from the general dependance mankind have upon each other, appeared in ſo ſtrong a light to ſome ſages in the heathen world, as to extort their endeavours for reducing it into practice, how much more forcibly, and upon how much more intereſting motives, has the practice of univerſal charity and benevolence been recommended and inculcated as a duty in the chriſtian diſpenſation? excluſive too of every proſpect of gratitude or reward in this world: bleſs them that curſe you; do good to them that hate and perſecute you; return not evil for evil; this is the immediate voice of divine inſpiration; and difficult as theſe injunctions may poſſibly ſeem to be to our paſſions, a compliance with them is nevertheleſs perfectly reconcileable

cileable to undepraved reaſon; for though the full reward of ſuch compliance be not actually promiſed to us here, yet thus much, by way of encouragement, we may be certain of from experience, that as innocence, patience, and a perſevering ſpirit of benevolence, will always communicate peace of conſcience and tranquility of mind, conſequently our compliance may, in ſome degree, be juſtly allowed to produce its own reward even in this world; and upon this unerring model it was, that Portia had formed her principles of charity, benevolence, and gratitude.

But to return to ſome farther particulars of her hiſtory. Careleſs had now been dead about two years, and Portia but juſt ſo far recovered from the ſad effects of her late misfortunes, as to begin to take the ſweets of that calm and undiſturbed repoſe which her brother's kindneſs and protection ſo generouſly afforded her, when an adventure occurred, that to her was full as diſagreeable as it was extraordinary: the reader may remember, that before her acquaintance with Careleſs ſhe had been juſt upon the point of marriage with Machaon, who had receded from his engagement in a moſt abrupt and unaccountable manner, and had thereby treated her and

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her whole family with the utmoſt indignity and injuſtice: from which period to the preſent ſhe had never inquired, nor heard any thing farther about him, but ſuppoſed that he was either dead, or ſtill continued to reſide abroad; the latter of which, it ſeems, he had done from the time of the event above-mentioned, and was but very lately returned; but before his departure he took care to ſettle a correſpondence with ſome friend here, in whom he could thoroughly confide, that ſhould, from time to time, tranſmit to him a faithful and particular account of Portia's whole behaviour during his abſence: the truth is, he had loved her from the beginning with the moſt fervent and unalterable paſſion, and had received from her every proof of a ſincere return that was conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt modeſty to grant; yet ſo it unfortunately fell out, that, before the completion of their mutual happineſs could take place, they were both baſely abuſed, without ſuſpecting the leaſt deception, but particularly Machaon, againſt whoſe life, as if by aſſaſſination, there ſeemed to have been a formed deſign, as will preſently be ſeen, which gave occaſion to the appearance of his having acted with ſo much diſhonour towards Portia and her family.

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Indeed the heart of man is often deceitful and baſe beyond meaſure; and yet, I believe, upon the firſt pleaſing idea of the object in view, too partially repreſented, as is generally the caſe, by the imagination, it may not always be ſo thoroughly ſenſible thereof itſelf, as when the ruinous effects of harbouring and indulging an unruly though darling paſſion become too glaring to admit of any palliation, and too fatal for any remedy to repair; nor can I ſuppoſe that even the worſt of mankind at firſt intend perpetrating all thoſe flagitious acts, of which, by the obſtinate indulgence of ſuch a paſſion, they afterwards become guilty; till having too long neglected and ſtifled all the tender calls of reaſon and conſcience, they are at laſt, by meer deſperation, hurried on to inextricable ruin.

The caſe now before us was in a great meaſure thus unhappily circumſtanced; Careleſs became violently enamoured of Portia from the firſt moment he had ſeen her, and determined, even at the riſk of life, nay of eternity itſelf, to poſſeſs her; but conſidering the unſettled ſituation he was then in, he wiſely judged, than an immediate application, inſtead of procuring him ſucceſs, might prove the certain means of his being excluded from viſiting

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any more in a family, where he was well received as a common acquaintance, and moreover treated with ſome particular marks of reſpect, on account of the friendſhip that had long ſubſiſted between Dennis Tradewell of Amſterdam and him; he therefore prudently reſolved to ſuſpend all direct overtures of addreſs to Portia till the arrival of this friend, who was expected, upon a viſit, into England, ſo ſoon as he could with ſafety abſent himſelf from the multiplicity of buſineſs in which he was engaged: in the mean time Careleſs, who now thought himſelf an able politician, proceeded to negotiate, by letter, with his friend upon the merits of his paſſion for Portia, and deſpaired not of bringing him at laſt wholly into his views; which that he effectually accompliſhed, has been already ſeen, but ſome of the baſe, iniquitous means he made uſe of for that purpoſe have not as yet been thoroughly laid open.

It happened a little unfortunately for Careleſs, that a conſiderable time before the arrival of his friend Dennis Tradewell, the affection of Portia had been deeply engaged in favour of Machaon, a man of moſt amiable character, whoſe whole family had long been well known to that of Portia, and adding to this the

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powerful advantage of a very conſiderable fortune, his alliance was looked upon as a moſt deſirable event; his perſon was graceful and genteel, and quite agreeable to Portia, but his principles and true character were known to be ſo unexceptionably good, that all delay, with a view to make enquiry upon that account, was thought wholly unneceſſary: thus powerful was the rival with whom Careleſs was now to contend; but all this neither diminiſhed his paſſion, nor daunted his reſolution, for difficulties, the more inſuperable they appeared, the more violently did they inflame both; happy indeed had it been, as well for himſelf, as for all the parties concerned in the iſſue of this affair, had that undaunted ſpirit of his been directed, as much by a principle of honour, in the proſecution of his paſſion, as it was inſpired by an object every way worthy thereof; but he, in ſpight of an excellent underſtanding, like too many others, was guilty of the moſt unpardonable error, not to ſay crime, in acting, as if he believed that, where the intereſt of the heart is really concerned, all ſcruples of honour, which obſtruct its gratification, may be overlooked with impunity.

He knew full well the ſolemn engagement that ſubſiſted between Portia and Machaon,

Machaon, and clandeſtinely ſet every engine at work to defeat it's ſucceſs, tho' wholly without effect, 'till the laſt vile machination was made uſe of, which nothing but infernal malice could ſuggeſt.

For ſome time before the day of this intended marriage was fixed on, proper emiſſaries had been employed by Careleſs, to infuſe into the mind of Machaon certain ſuſpicions, that were highly injurious to Portia's honour; as if ſhe had in ſecret admitted the addreſſes of Careleſs; but as Machaon well knew, that all inſinuations of this kind were utterly inconſiſtent with her character, he accordingly treated them with the juſt contempt they deſerved, relying on her virtue, and the ſincerity of her affection with ſo entire a confidence, that he thought it would in ſome meaſure be offering violence to both, ſhould he communicate to her, or any of her family, ſo much as the leaſt hint of that ſcandalous information which he had thus received; the affair therefore, notwithſtanding the baſeneſs of this attempt, proceeded in a very proſperous train, as hath been intimated already, till the very morning whereon the parties were to have been united, when about five o' clock Machaon was haſtily called up, and received a letter from Careleſs, confirming

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in Subſtance the full force of the above information, with the material addition of avowing from Portia's own conſent an inconteſtable right to the poſſeſſion of her heart; and withal inſiſting, in a peremptory manner, upon an immediate interview, the place of rendezvous being appointed, where Careleſs informed him he was then waiting, determined to aſſert his right at the hazard of his life, in caſe that Machaon ſhould perſiſt in the unavailing reſolution of proceeding any farther with that lady.

Machaon, though a man of peaceful diſpoſition, was yet by no means deficient in point of ſpirit; and however he might ſecretly diſapprove the occaſion which now called upon him to exert it, yet as he obſerved that cuſtom and common fame had uſurped the guardianſhip of honour ſo abſolutely as to be able, in an inſtant, to ſtigmatize even the brave man himſelf with the vile appellation of coward, who ſhould coyly heſitate at an invitation to commit murder, whenever that deſtructive principle of falſe honour gave brutal courage the leaſt opportunity for ſo doing; I ſay, for want of true reſolution, in fact, Machaon thought himſelf obliged, in point of honour, to accept the appointed interview, directly contrary, as he knew

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it was, to every ſuggeſtion both of reaſon and religion; for he was, in truth, no infidel, though now grown all at once ſo like an abandoned one, that he choſe, in ſpight of conviction, to riſque the perils of eternity, rather than ſurvive the bugbear infamy of being cenſured by fools and knaves; for without doubt the wiſe, the virtuous, and the truly brave, would all have inſtantly abſolved him from the imputation of cowardice, for not engaging in ſo bad a cauſe, or otherwiſe it muſt at all times ſeem highly reaſonable and decent, to pay a punctilious deference even to the challenge of a highwayman, who wantonly ſhall claim, by merit of his piſtol, an abſolute right to the poſſeſſion of what is juſtly the property of another.

However, in regard to the iſſue of this combat, it was, in truth, the artifice of Careleſs, rather than the ſuperiority of his proweſs, that gave him all the advantage which he gained in the end over his rival; though it muſt be owned, that even victory had like to have proved fatal to him, being full as ſeverely wounded in the duel as Machaon; who now ſuppoſing it altogether improbable, that any man could be mad enough to engage in ſo deſperate an adventure, without having previouſly

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received the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of the lady's affection, who was the ſole cauſe of their quarrel; I ſay, from this perſuaſion he concluded, but with unpardonable precipitancy, that Portia muſt, without all queſtion, be moſt conſummately faithleſs and baſe, and conſequently unworthy of all farther care or attention on his part; whereas the truth is, ſhe was intirely innocent, and ſo little acquainted with Careleſs at this time, that ſhe never once ſuſpected his having the leaſt deſign upon her: had ſhe known that he was the perſon with whom Machaon then fought, ſhe would moſt probably have detected his vile contrivance, in making uſe of her name to facilitate his execrable project; and in that caſe I am very confident, that nothing could ever have prevailed upon her to have married him; but he acted throughout the whole affair with ſo much precaution and cunning, as even to have no ſeconds that might poſſibly appear as witneſſes againſt him, and during his whole life he kept it a profound ſecret from Portia; he knew, the reſentment he had thus ſpirited up in his rival, againſt his miſtreſs, was too ſtrong to admit of any terms of reconciliation by way of eclairciſement, at leaſt before his plot had operated ſucceſsfully;

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and afterwards, it would be to no purpoſe; the ſnare, in ſhort, was too well laid for Machaon eaſily to avoid falling into it, ſo that the latter was indeed the dupe of his own credulity, and merited, in ſome degree, the puniſhment he met with, for his too haſty and unjuſt reſentment againſt Portia, who loved him with the utmoſt tenderneſs and fidelity.

The conſequences which immediately enſued upon this occaſion, have already been fully related in a former part of this work, and it was not till near twelve months after the death of Careleſs, that Machaon was undeceived in regard to the abuſe and baſe impoſition which had been practiſed on him by that wretch; but if he was formerly agitated with all the violence of indignation and fury, tranſported almoſt to madneſs by jealouſy and diſappointed love, he was now tortured ſtill more ſeverely by the conſciouſneſs of having ſo irreparably injured the innocent, the deſerving Portia, and beſides, the only woman whom he had ever loved: from the force of inclination therefore, as well as from an uncorrupted principle of juſtice, he was now determined to make all the atonement he could; and he gave indeed the higheſt proof of both that any man could give: he ſoon convinced

Tradewell how baſely he had been injured by Careleſs; and informed him, that he was no more a ſtranger to the inhuman Treatment which Portia had met with, than he was to the many exemplary virtues by which ſhe had ſupported herſelf under it; he bitterly condemned the folly and raſhneſs of his own reſentment, that had proved ſo fatal to both; and as he was now returned to his native country, with no other view but that of making her all the reparation in his power, by laying, not only his whole fortune, but his very life at her feet, he hoped that Tradewell, from the great equity of his diſpoſition, would favour him with his friendſhip upon the occaſion.

Tradewell, without giving him any poſitive hopes, immediately communicated this propoſal to his ſiſter, but as he was well acquainted with her prudence, and the ſoundneſs of her judgment, he by no means attempted to influence, or biaſs her in Machaon's favour, or to interfere farther than by giving it as his opinion, that ſhe ought at leaſt to allow him a patient hearing, which ſhe readily conſented to, provided that Tradewell would all the while be preſent; ſhe accordingly received him with all that eaſe and preſence of mind, that is ſo eminently the reſult of

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good breeding, when found in conjunction with virtue and good ſenſe; ſhe thanked him in the politeſt manner for the generous offer he had lately made in her favour, and ſcrupled not to acknowledge, that her preſent fallen condition did but too plainly evince the ſingular merit of ſuch an offer, to admit the leaſt doubt either of his ſincerity, or her gratitude; and though ſhe hoped, that nothing would ever be able to efface the juſt ſenſe ſhe then entertained of his generoſity and benevolence, ſhe muſt nevertheleſs beg leave to aſſure him, with the utmoſt candour, that the peculiarity of her fate was ſuch, as rendered a compliance with his propoſal abſolutely impoſſible; but at the ſame time entreated, he would do her the juſtice to believe that her reluctance proceeded not from any particular diſlike of his perſon or character; nor yet from any reſentment in regard to paſt tranſactions; her reſolution, ſhe ſaid, had long been deliberately founded on reaſons, which to her would always appear invincible, and therefore, as it was irrevocably fixed, ſhe hoped his compaſſion would ſpare her the mortification of being urged any farther on that head; for after ſuch a declaration, ſhe ſhould be under a neceſſity of conſidering every farther attempt to ſhake that reſolution, as a hoſtile attempt

to deprive her of the ſtate of tranquility and happineſs which ſhe then enjoyed; and having ſaid this, ſhe inſtantly retired.

CHAP. VII.

Machaon takes his final leave of Portia; the death of Lucia, with other great afflictions of Portia's; an account of her behaviour under them; Dennis Tradewell comes to England; Charles Tradewell is captivated with the fine form of Belinda; Dennis's return to Holland, and takes Portia with him.

MACHAON's ſurprize is not to be expreſſed in words, to find Portia deaf to all his entreaties, and to every motive of intereſt, that he could urge in his own favour; this aſtoniſhed him beyond meaſure, and he remained ſilent for ſome time after Portia had left the room; at laſt he recovered himſelf enough to apply to Tradewell, and begged him by their former friendſhip to endeavour to ſoften his ſiſter's inflexibility, and to give him leave to continue his viſits at his houſe; to which Tradewell anſwered, he feared he had no room to flatter himſelf, though he confeſſed he thought Portia had in this particular miſtaken her intereſt; but

begged

begged leave to remind him, that upon the renewal of their acquaintance, he had aſſured him, that he ſhould ſtand neuter in this affair, and not attempt to biaſs his ſiſter any way; his reaſons, he ſaid, for acting in this manner, he was certain muſt be obvious; and that upon cool reflection, he himſelf would approve them; that as to Portia, he knew the great rectitude of her mind, and that ſhe was immoveable in what ſhe thought was right; and was very confident, her anſwer to him was founded upon the moſt mature deliberation; and therefore, time, he believed, would work no alteration in his favour; nevertheleſs, as an old and valuable acquaintance, he ſhould be glad to ſee him at his houſe. In ſhort, not to tire my readers, a year paſſed on, and Machaon ſtill continued his viſits, and Portia remained in the ſame diſpoſition; ſhe ſaw him in mixed company, and behaved to him with the ſame politeneſs as to other gentlemen of Tradewell's acquaintance, but never would ſee him in private, nor could ever be prevailed with to receive a letter from him. Machaon now began to think he was only feeding a hopeleſs flame, and that there was (if even that was not too late) but one way left for him to recover his long loſt peace of mind;

which was to break off all acquaintance with the too amiable Portia, and conſequently with Tradewell; and the moſt effectual manner he thought of carrying this ſcheme into execution was, for him to quit the town. He therefore retired immediately to one of the moſt pleaſant villages in England, bordering on the Thames; here ſolitude, joined with philoſophy, gave him relief. He now ſaw, that though Portia was the only woman in the world that could make him happy, yet for reaſons beyond human penetration, that happineſs was denied to him; reflection taught him acquieſcence, and time, that friend to woe, brought at laſt eaſe to his tortured boſom, if not content; he had acquired a large fortune, with a fair character, and for the remainder of his days he ſpent his Income in acts of beneficence and real charity; for though he lived to a great age he never married; he was much eſteemed by the literatee, and made a figure in the learned world; yet, what was a moſt uncommon circumſtance, he was a very agreeable companion, for he poſſeſſed all the ſocial virtues in the higheſt degree.

But it is time to return to Portia; who rejoiced to find, that Machaon had at laſt exerted that good underſtanding ſhe knew

him

him bleſſed with, and was in the road to peace; ſhe likewiſe congratulated herſelf upon being delivered from addreſſes that were very diſagreeable to her; for though ſhe did juſtice to Machaon's merit, and admired his virtues, nay, would have greatly eſteemed him for a friend, if this alone could have contributed to his happineſs; yet ſhe could never bring herſelf to conſider him, or any other man, in a different light from the death of Careleſs; eſteem and friendſhip was all that the unhappy Portia had to beſtow.

She was now called upon to exerciſe all her ſtock of fortitude; and indeed, a mind leſs armed with virtue than her own, muſt have ſunk under the weight; and though it was a viſitation ſhe had not yet met, Portia received it as ſhe ought.

For of all the numerous train of evils that mankind are ſubject to on this ſublunary globe, the greateſt ſurely is the death of valuable friends: Portia's youngeſt ſon and her only daughter, in whoſe infant minds ſhe had beheld all the dawning virtues that her own fond heart could wiſh, and which, in anticipation, ſhe had amuſed herſelf in cultivation, to make them uſeful as well as ornamental members of ſociety, were both at once ſnatched from her by the ſame fatal diſtemper: this blow

was immediately ſucceeded by the death of the ever to be honoured wife and good Lucia, who, like a ſhock of corn ripe for the reaper's hand, full of years, went to her grave in peace: Portia's eldeſt ſon, and now only child, ſurvived his grand-mother but a little while; a violent fever in a few days hurried him from the arms of the indulgent Portia: he was a youth of the moſt promiſing genius, and of a very ſweet diſpoſition; the progreſs he had made in his ſtudies much exceeded his years; and his filial piety was ſo great, that Portia juſtly promiſed herſelf ſhe ſhould find in him not only a ſon, but a friend and protector.

Such a train of afflictions, each following the other ſo cloſely, for they all happened in leſs than a year, few people could have ſupported; but Portia was always equal to herſelf for the reaſons I have given elſewhere; her ſentiments upon this occaſion were the ſame with the inimitable doctor Young, in his Night-Thoughts; where he ſays,

All, all is right, by God ordained, or done,
And who, but God, reſumed the friends
he gave;
And have I been complaining then ſo long,
Complaining of his favours, pain and death:
Who,

Who, without pain's advice, would e'er be
good;
Who, without death, but would be good
in vain:
Heav'n gives us friends to bleſs the preſent
ſcene,
Reſumes them to prepare us for the next.
All evils natural are moral goods,
All diſcipline indulgence on the whole:
None are unhappy; all have cauſe to ſmile,
But ſuch as to themſelves that cauſe deny.
Our faults are at the bottom of our pains;
Error, in act or judgment, is the ſource
Of endleſs ſighs: we ſin, or we miſtake,
And nature tax: when falſe opinion ſtings,
Let impious grief be baniſh'd, joy indulg'd;
But chiefly then, when grief puts in her
claim:
Joy from the joyous frequently betrays,
Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe;
Joy amidſt ills corroborates, exalts;
'Tis joy and conqueſt, joy and virtue too:
A noble fortitude in ills delights.
Heav'n—earth—ourſelves—'tis duty—
glory, peace.
Affliction is the good man's ſhining ſcene;
Proſperity conceals his brighteſt ray:
As night to ſtars—woe luſtre gives to man:
Heroes in battle—pilots in the ſtorm,
And virtue in calamities—admire:
The crown of manhood is a winter joy,

An evergreen—that ſtands the northern
blaſt,
And bloſſoms in the rigour of our fate.

The firſt time that Portia related theſe melancholy particulars of her ſtory to me, I could not forbear expreſſing ſome concern, joined with aſtoniſhment, how a woman of her exemplary piety ſhould be thus in a manner ſingled out to ſuffer ſuch ſevere inflictions from providence; ſhe haſtily interrupted me, and ſaid, my dear Cornelia, your youth is the only excuſe that even my regard and tenderneſs can poſſibly make for you; never dare to ſet rules to omniſcience in the government of the world; you have, Cornelia, continued ſhe, been making uſe of words without ideas; but take this for a maxim, the Almighty has no delight in the miſery of his creatures, and therefore whatever we ſuffer here is either to prevent a ſeverer puniſhment, or to prepare us for greater bleſſings; the ways of providence are inſcrutable; they are not to be inquired into by finite beings; and if we find them grievous, the only method to prove them otherwiſe, is to ſubmit to God's decrees with an entire reſignation; a contrary procedure, ſaid ſhe, will not alleviate, but muſt infallibly increaſe the burthen,

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as we are not able to diſtinguiſh between the ſcourges and bleſſings of life; if my fortune and friends had been uninterruptedly continued to me, ſaid Portia, it is highly probable I ſhould have been wretched; but this is certain, whoever depends upon providence can never want a ſupport; and ſurely it is not difficult to bring ourſelves to believe in the very fountain of all truth; eſpecially when we conſider that our diſtruſt can be of no ſervice to us; for, as the royal poet obſerves, whoſo is wiſe will ponder theſe things, and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord; I now, ſaid ſhe, look up to heaven with gratitude for the unexpected bleſſings that have been poured into my lap, and upon my fellow creatures with good-nature, benevolence, and a univerſal charity.

But as I fear this long digreſſion from the principal ſtory may not equally pleaſe all my readers, ſo I would willingly make the beſt apology in my power, and muſt therefore beg leave to remind them, that at firſt I promiſed to give them the ſecret of the grand coſmetick, and conſequently cannot omit the leaſt particular that relates to the valuable Portia, who was in poſſeſſion of the whole art, without an injury to them. My apprehenſion of giving

offence ariſes from having obſerved, that there are people in the world who are jealous of thoſe who pretend to inſtruct them. We are all fond of our own reaſon and judgment, and are but too apt to ſuſpect our beſt friends of ſome deſign, who endeavour to perſuade us to our own good, if that good happens to be contrary to our own inclination; for the power that inclination has over the judgment is much greater than can well be imagined by thoſe people who have not experienced it; indeed it is to the uſurpation of inclination, and the judgment lying dormant, that I place all the errors of the female world: but, beſides all this, there is a ſpecies of pride, a fantaſtical punctilio of honour, in us poor mortals, which will hardly permit us to own ourſelves in a condition to want another perſon's advice; we all love to make our own experiments, and ſooner truſt any ſenſe than our ears; but I muſt beg my readers to remember it is Portia that now ſpeaks, Portia, who had herſelf practiſed all ſhe recommends; and, as it is the happineſs of my female readers that I aim at, I would fain flatter myſelf that ſome few among them, at leaſt, would applaud the goodneſs of my heart, in attempting to give them a true copy, though I confeſs a faint one, of this great original.

I now return to my hiſtory; and am to acquaint my readers that Dennis Tradewell, of Amſterdam, had been in a declining ſtate of health for ſome time; his phyſicians apprehended he was going into a conſumption, and therefore preſſed him to try a change of air; he now determined to come to England, having before paſſed ſome months in the ſouth of France without any ſenſible effect; he accordingly came here, and had, upon his arrival, a conſultation of the moſt eminent of the whole faculty of phyſick; they were unanimous in ordering him to Briſtol; thither therefore he went, attended by Charles Tradewell and Portia; and this place it ſeemed was deſtined for the ſurrender of Charles's heart; for here it was that he firſt ſaw the enchanting Belinda; this lady was not unknown to Portia before this time, though not of her acquaintance; and Charles, who had, unmoved, beheld all the blooming beauties of this great town, now wondered chance had never thrown this angel in his way. Dennis Tradewell continued at Briſtol all the ſeaſon; but received no ſort of benefit. Upon his return to London, all his Complaints grew worſe; and as his health ſeemed gradually to decay, he now determined to return Home, after eight month's abſence;

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and this reſolution he was obliged to put in execution ſooner than he at firſt intended, having received letters that informed him, that his preſence in Holland was become abſolutely neceſſary; he therefore prepared to leave England as ſoon as poſſible, but not without taking his ſiſter Portia with him, who, he ſaid, had now no particular attachment to ſtay in England; he preſſed this point ſo very ſtrenuouſly, that at laſt ſhe conſented; perhaps the rather, as ſhe ſecretly imagined that her brother Charles would fall a voluntary ſacrifice to the beauteous form of Belinda, a match ſhe could by no means approve, had her fortune been three times what it was; but this ſhe did not think it was prudent to mention to either of her brothers, as Charles appeared remarkably reſerved on this ſubject, and Dennis's health was, as ſhe thought, in too bad a ſtate to be diſturbed with what ſhe hoped would prove only an idle conjecture of her own: Charles attended Dennis and Portia to Harwich, where they parted from each other in ſo affectionate a manner, that one would have imagined they had foreſeen this farewel was to be eternal, as indeed it proved. Charles ſtayed to ſee the ſhip under ſail, and then returned to London.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Dennis Tradewell and Portia goes to Holland; Portia receives ſeveral advantageous offers of marriage there, all which ſhe rejects; Charles Tradewell marries Belinda; the death of Dennis; Portia leaves Holland, and reſides for ſeveral years in France, at laſt comes to England, gives Cornelia an invitation to live with her; ſome account of their manner of life.

DENNIS and Portia arrived ſafe in Holland; and Portia obſerved with pleaſure, that he bore the fatigue both of his journey and voyage from England much better than could have been imagined, which gave her ſome flattering expectations that he was really better. As he had lived at Amſterdam from his youth, and had acquired a large fortune with a fair character, being remarkable for probity and ſtrict juſtice in all his dealings, ſo the news of his arrival was received with joy; all the people of diſtinction, both in that and the neighbouring provinces, came to congratulate him upon his return, and to pay their compliments to Portia. As his diſtemper was of a flattering nature, ſo it is not to be wondered at that he thought himſelf much better; and

and the company of the engaging Portia greatly contributed to tune his mind to peace; for in her he found not only an agreeable chearful companion, but a faithful friend, on whose judgment he might safely rely: however he thought it prudent, in case of a relapse, immediately to set about contracting his affairs, for fear of accidents; and as his dealings were very extensive, so he foresaw this was a work that would require much time, and therefore the sooner he began it the better.

Portia had, without intending it, made several conquests; and had rendered herself so very agreeable, that Dennis Tradewell's sister was the chief subject of conversation; in short, she here received several very advantageous offers of marriage; those gentlemen who applied first to Dennis, believing that the securest way to gain Portia, received for answer, that his sister was entirely her own mistress, and that he would no way interfere in the matter; Portia herself rejected all the dazling proposals that were made her in so polite a manner, that, though they ceased to be her lovers, they still continued to be her admirers and friends: Portia thought upon this occasion with the matrons of antient Rome, who, as monsieur Rollin has informed us, believed it inglorious to

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enter into ſecond vows; though I apprehend this part of Portia's character will not recommend her to ſome of our modern ladies, who, if I am rightly informed, enter into engagements with two or three at once, beſides the diſtinguiſhed favourite to whom at firſt they have plighted their vows.

Dennis and Portia had now been in Holland near two years; in which time they had often heard from Charles Tradewell my father; but Portia had obſerved, that for the laſt year he had wrote much ſeldomer; never indeed to Dennis but when buſineſs obliged him; and all his letters to herſelf were rather formal than affectionate; this uncommon coolneſs in his behaviour alarmed her; and as ſhe was not conſcious ſhe had done any thing to merit it, ſhe wrote to Charles to know what was become of that open ſincerity once ſo very conſpicuous in his character, and which indeed is the grand characteriſtick of every gentleman and man of honour to his approved friends: his anſwer to this letter was ambiguous; but his next letters to Dennis and herſelf cleared up the myſtery, by informing them he then was, and had been for ſome time, making his addreſſes to Belinda; and that he had met with the greateſt oppoſition from her family,

mily, as I have informed my readers in the beginning of this work; though he flattered himself he should now succeed; his letters were filled with high encomiums of Belinda's sprightly wit, the brilliancy of her conversation, and the superior power of her external charms.

Dennis's surprise upon the receipt of this letter is not to be expressed: he had never been a man of gallantry, no not in his youth; and was now past the meridian of life; he knew nothing of Belinda, but what Portia had occasionally informed him of at Bristol; but he knew enough to make him believe she had too much gaiety in her disposition to make a proper wife for his brother: Charles was a grave man, used to, and fond of domestick happiness; Dennis remembered her person, and admired her as he would have done a picture, but had never thought of her longer than he saw her; and now to find Charles dwell so much upon the perfections of Belinda's person, was to him like the whims of a distempered brain.

He therefore not only wrote himself, but begged Portia, in the most pathetic manner, to use all her rhetorick, and endeavour to save this much-loved brother from impending ruin; in short, they omitted no argument to dissuade Charles from

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an alliance with Belinda; but all alas in vain, he was a ſlave to her fine form, and conſequently deaf to the advice, nay, intreaties of his real friends. This very ſoon became an affair of the greateſt concern to Dennis; he reſented Charles's behaviour ſo highly, which he termed obſtinacy, that all correſpondence was broke off between Dennis, Portia, and Tradewell; and Dennis immediately altered his will, and left his whole fortune to Portia, without any limitations; he did not long ſurvive this diſpoſition of his affairs, for as he was almoſt worn out by a tedious lingering indiſpoſition of body, ſo this blow to his fraternal affection, which had never before been uninterrupted, like a northern blaſt to a flower in autumn, ſunk him to the grave.

Portia, upon the death of Dennis, found herſelf intitled to a very large fortune; but as women are generally unacquainted with buſineſs, and in a country to the cuſtoms of which ſhe was an entire ſtranger, ſo it is not to be wondered at that ſhe loſt conſiderable ſums of money; and with all her care and induſtry to ſettle her affairs, ſhe could not realize much above forty thouſand pounds, Engliſh money.

When this was accompliſhed, ſhe immediately quitted Holland, where ſhe had

now

now no connexions, and went to France; where there were large ſums due to her from Dennis's correſpondents, and where indeed all her relations lived; and as Tradewell from the time of his marriage with Belinda had been dead to Portia, ſo ſhe choſe to continue in France to that period of time I have before mentioned.

Upon her arrival in England, ſhe took a large and very handſome houſe, and furniſhed it in the moſt elegant manner; it was in a genteel, airy, but retired part of the town, far from the noiſe and buſtle of the great world; here, with herſelf and ſix ſervants, (which were all that compoſed her family) I received an invitation to live; ſhe expreſſed the moſt grateful ſenſe of the obligations ſhe was under to both Hortenſius and Arſpacia, for their favours, their care, and in ſhort, their whole behaviour to me. There was a kind of ſympathy in the virtues of theſe three Perſons, that led them inſenſibly to create ſo great and ſtrict a friendſhip, that, I think I may ſay, they formed another triumvirate.

Portia's family was governed with the niceſt decorum, her own moſt excellent example ſhe juſtly thought was the beſt monitor to her ſervants, who conſidered her not only as their patroneſs, their friend,

but

but almoſt their parent; duty and obedience held but the ſecond place in their eſteem; affection for their lady prompted them with pleaſure to execute even her leaſt command.

The moment I entered her houſe, ſhe aſſured me I was at home; and in the politeſt manner imaginable, begged in return, I would favour her with the firſt place in my friendſhip; ſhe told me, ſhe hoped I ſhould never diſcover her the moroſe old woman; her afflictions, ſhe believed, had not affected her natural temper, which was to encourage chearfulneſs, and to be an enemy only to vice. She immediately preſented me with an hundred guineas, which ſhe ſaid was for my cloaths and pocket; and likewiſe told me, I ſhould annually receive the ſame ſum from her, ſhe intending to have the intereſt of my little fortune laid up with the principal.

Our lives glided on ſo regularly, that every freſh day might appear literally another yeſterday; we conſtantly attended the ſervice of the church every morning, and if the weather permitted, we afterwards took a walk, or the air in Portia's coach for the benefit of our healths; but we never ſacrificed the mornings either to pleaſure or viſitings, but kept them ſacred to occaſional buſineſs, or the improve-

provements of our own minds; for as Portia knew the value of time, ſo ſhe never threw it away, by doing trifles of nothing.

In one of theſe morning excurſions, Portia ſaid to me, in the plan of your education, my dear Cornelia, I have conſulted your glory more than my own; and I ſhall be compleatly happy to ſee you good and virtuous, without entertaining the leaſt vanity in forming you either by blood or precepts; and your great docility in liſtening to all I ſay, makes me flatter myſelf, you will do all that I deſire. The ſubject I am now going to recommend to you is of the utmoſt conſequence, and calls for your greateſt attention, being nothing leſs than religion.

Where I to define religion, ſaid ſhe, I ſhould call it exalted reaſon, fifted from the groſſer parts of earth; it dwelleth in the upper region of the mind, where there are the feweſt clouds to darken it, it is both the foundation and the crown of all the virtues; it is morality improved, and raiſed to its height by being carried nearer heaven, the only place where perfection reſideth; it cleanſeth the underſtanding as it bruſheth off the filth that hangeth on our ſouls; if we was hired to practice it, religion would be able to out-bid the

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corrupted world with all it can offer, if reaſon is admitted to be judge of the value of the two. As this is a true ſtate of the caſe, it is worth all your care, my dear Cornelia, to make religion your choice in your youth and proſperity, and not do as I have known ſome ladies, who make religion a refuge in old age and adverſity. True piety, ſaid ſhe, will be your ſtrongeſt guard and ſureſt protection, and without this, the ſtricteſt woman in the world, let her ideas of honour be ever ſo nice, cannot always anſwer for the ſafety and preſervation of her virtue; let me therefore earneſtly recommend to you, to make your life a ſteady courſe of virtue, that it may run like a ſmooth ſtream, and let religion be the ſpring from which you practice all your virtues, but take great care that your devotion is not conſtrained, for, like all other duties, you muſt make it your pleaſure too, or elſe it will have very little efficacy; a devout mind is raiſed above the little vexations and croſs accidents of life, to which other people for want of this are daily expoſed; I do not recommend a ſtupid indifference, but a wiſe reſignation in all things to the divine will; by this means your mind will always be in a ſtate of eaſe and tranquility, you will not be tied too cloſe to this world, but it will

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hang about you like a looſe garment, which is ſoon to be parted with, to put on a better; I could ſay a great deal more, but I think religion ought not to deſcend to the borrowing any arguments out of itſelf, ſince there we may find every thing that ſhould invite us.

Cornelia perceiving Portia to be ſilent, returned her unfeigned thanks, and ſaid, that by the aſſiſtance of her good example, ſhe hoped, in time, to be able to carry her moſt excellent precepts into practice, but begged her, if ſhe was not already fatigued with talking, ſhe would favour her with ſome inſtructions for her conduct in the world; as ſhe ſaid, ſhe was very certain, that a lady of her great penetration and experience, muſt be able to furniſh her with many uſeful leſſons to that purpoſe; which, ſaid Cornelia, as I am young, I greatly ſtand in need of, and yet am not capable of making thoſe neceſſary reflections which I want; to which Portia anſwered, the world, indeed, Cornelia, is a very dangerous enemy for a young mind unarmed to encounter with:

For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
If leſs than heavenly virtue is our guard.

Thus;

Thus; a ſtrange kind of curs'd neceſſity
Brings down the ſterling temper of his ſoul
By baſe alloy—to bear the current ſtamp
Below, call'd wiſdom:—ſinks him into ſafety,
And brands him into credit with the world,
Where ſpecious titles, dignify, diſgrace,
And nature's injures.—Are arts of life,
Where brighter reaſon prompts to bolder Crimes,
And heavenly talents make infernal hearts:
That unſurmountable extreme of guilt:
Dr. YOUNG's Night-Thoughts.

You have ſet me a very difficult taſk, Cornelia, continued Portia, but to give you a proof, that nothing in my power ſhall ever be wanting that may conduce to your happineſs, I ſhall attempt it; though, perhaps, by doing ſo, I ſhall riſk the good opinion you at preſent entertain of my Abilities.

I think, ſaid Portia, it is no ſmall part of wiſdom, to guard againſt folly, and, perhaps, it may be a ſurer way of inſtructing a young lady to tell her what ſhe ſhould not do, than what ſhe ſhould do; there are ſo many temptations in this great town, and what is worſe, ſo

many promoters of vice and folly to be met with, that I hope you will not imagine it proceeds from ſpleen and ill-nature, if I acquaint you, that you cannot poſſibly be too careful of your company and conduct. Always remember, Cornelia, that Eden had not an abſtemious Eve; and her fair daughters prove their pedigree, and aſk their Adams who would not be wiſe; it is abſolutely neceſſary therefore, before you come to act your part on the ſtage of this great theatre the world, that your virtue ſhould be well grounded, and attended with a very ſtrong reſolution; I muſt teach you to ſet a juſt value upon yourſelf, and to be aſhamed of nothing but vice, which is really ſhameful, becauſe it is criminal; and this is in ſhort only the ſame precept that Epictetus gave to his young pupil; if, ſaid he, you have a deſire to make any proficiency in philoſophy, you muſt firſt be thoroughly convinced of the excellency of my rules, and reſolve to obſerve them upon all occaſions; you muſt expect to be laughed at, and derided by the vulgar; Epictetus here means all people that have a low and vulgar manner of thinking, and with concern I tell you, you will meet with too many that deſerve this diſtinction among people of high birth and

large

large fortunes, but regard not their opinions of you; think only how you may act agreeably to the dictates of your reason and conscience; be good and wise, that is sufficient; desire not the applauses of the million.—But the generality of young people of the present age think this too hard a lesson, they only endeavour to render themselves agreeable to those with whom they converse; and as the world is more inclined to vice than virtue, they comply with their taste, rather than lose their acquaintance; from this principle most of the extravagancies, that we daily see people of the best sense guilty of, may be accounted for.

From hence too proceeds that variety of folly, which appears in the actions of the more unthinking part of the world; these poor creatures are betrayed into faults meerly from want of thought; whereas, the others are obliged to do violence to themselves, and put a stop to their own reflections, in order to commit them; what a mean abject spirit is this, to lower our own understandings, and subject them to the caprice of the senseless and stupidly vicious; to suppress our reason for fear of their censure, and not dare to be wise and good, because it

is not the will or the intereſt of our acquaintance that we ſhould be ſo.

Can Britons, can lovers of liberty, (for there is ſtill ſome among us that ſeem fond of the name of freedom) thus ſubmit to have fetters put upon their very minds, which is the worſt kind of ſlavery; but do you, Cornelia, deteſt the very thought of being thus ſhackled? for, indeed, continued Portia, it is owing in a great meaſure to this mental cowardice, that vice has ſo prevailed among us.

For vice would ſoon give place, had virtue the courage to appear in all her native beauty; would you then enjoy happineſs in old age, by which I mean peace of mind; nothing but a youth ſpent in virtue can produce it; and, I am very certain, there is no other method than religion, to obtain this moſt deſireable end; which will turn all our paſſions and affections towards heaven.

Here Portia ended, and Cornelia returned her grateful thanks, and as it grew late, they haſtened home to dreſs and prepare for dinner.

As I look upon a good education to be a great bleſſing; and believe our happineſs both here and hereafter wholly depends upon it, ſo I have dwelt particularly on Portia's precepts, hoping they may

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be of ſervice to ſome of my fair readers, who have had the misfortune to be neglected in their youth; and in that caſe I adviſe the cultivation of their minds at any age; for whatever mean opinion the gentlemen entertain of the ladies in general, nature has certainly beſtowed upon ſome of them capacities and good underſtandings; and the very wide difference that appears between the ſexes, is in ſome meaſure owing to the womens receiving no education at all; which indeed is now the caſe among us, with ſome few exceptions.

Would my fair country-women believe this, and be perſuaded to take a little pains for the improvement of their minds, we ſhould ſoon find ſome of them would be remarkable for true wit and ſound judgment; at preſent the Engliſh ladies are diſtinguiſhed by foreigners only by fine ſhapes and lovely faces; this would effectually ſecure the conqueſts of their eyes; nay more, where their external charms failed, their intellectual would prevail; and, what is a very material circumſtance, a ſlave thus made would be a ſlave eternal, as the charms that firſt ſubdued him would improve by time: I forbear to mention, that this would make them valuable wives, and agreeable companions; for as that is

now the leaſt of their care, ſo I fear it will not be admitted as an argument in my favour: a very little time, which might eaſily be ſpared from dreſs, cards, and diverſions, ſpent every day in reading and reflection, would bring all this to paſs: and that I may not appear ſingular in my aſſertion, I ſhall ſubjoin a few lines, ſaid to be wrote by a lady, as much diſtinguiſhed for her wit and beauty, as by the high ſtation ſhe holds in the world.

A female mind like a rude fallow lies,
No ſeed is ſown, but weeds ſpontaneous riſe;
As well might we expect in winter, ſpring,
As land untill'd a fruitful crop ſhould bring;
Can female youth, left to weak woman's care,
Miſled by cuſtom, folly's fruitful heir,
Told that their charms a monarch may enſlave,
That beauty, like the gods, can kill or ſave,
Taught the arcana's, the myſterious arts,
By ambuſh--dreſs--to catch unwary hearts;
If wealthy born, taught to liſp French, and dance,
Their morals, like Lucretia's, left to chance,
Strangers to reaſon--and reflection made,
Left to their paſſions--and by them betrayed,

Untaught

Untaught the noble end of glorious truth,
Bred to deceive, even from their earlieſt youth,
Unus'd to books, not virtue taught to prize,
Whoſe mind a ſavage waſte unpeopled lies,
Which to ſupply, trifles fill up the void,
And idly buſy, to no end employ'd,
Can theſe from ſuch a ſchool more virtue ſhew,
Or tempting vice treat like a common foe;
Can they reſiſt when ſoothing pleaſure woes,
Preſerve their virtue when their fame they loſe;
No more can we expect our modern wives
Hero's ſhould breed, who lead ſuch uſeleſs lives.

CHAP. IX.

A continuation of Portia's manner of life, with an attempt towards the characters of ſome people who viſited her; a deſcription of Portia's particular friends.

PORTIA kept a great deal of good company of both ſexes; if people of genteel eaſy fortunes, good underſtandings, liberal educations, and the moſt unblemiſhed characters, are allowed to come properly under that denomination; yet

Portia had no concerts of muſicks, no balls, no routs, nor private parties at cards, nor did ſhe ſee maſques; yet, notwithſtanding all this, Portia was well viſited, as the phraſe is, though the grand magnet ſeems to be wanting, as it is pleaſure now, and only pleaſure, that attracts the mind, and captivates the underſtanding.

Whether this was owing to the diſtinguiſhing taſte of Portia's acquaintance, or to their invincible ſtupidity, I ſhall not take upon me abſolutely to determine; though I am very well inclined to believe it was the former; but as I profeſs myſelf not to be an inhabitant of the great and gay world, ſo I apprehend my opinion will have little weight, as all people out of that elucidating circle are ſaid to be deprived of common ſenſe: but be that as it may; Portia's houſe in an afternoon was like a ſeminary, where the old might improve in virtue and wiſdom, and the young might learn all that was laudable and praiſe-worthy; all new things worth reading were read, and comments made upon the work by the company then preſent.

At other times the converſation turned upon ſome uſeful piece of hiſtory, or the recommendation of ſome virtue which ſeemed to be grown obſolete and out of

uſe among us, or the degradation of ſome reigning vice, or folly; for it was Portia's opinion, that folly unreproved was a tacit invitation to crimes of a much deeper die.

Portia's ſituation in life indeed obliged her ſometimes to admit people, who had no title by their own merit to her company, and who were incapable of bearing any part in the converſations that were carried on at her houſe; but then they were allied to perſons of merit and virtue, or by the rank they held in the world could not decently be denied admittance into all polite apartments; and her good-nature gave them an opportunity to improve; at leaſt they did not offend; and ſometimes, by exhibiting a faſhionable abſurdity, they gave a ſprightly turn to the whole converſation; and, at the worſt, they only added to her furniture by filling empty chairs.

Portia was no enemy to the ſtage; and often would ſay, that, under ſome proper regulations, ſhe believed the theatre would be of uſe; ſhe therefore never oppoſed my going there in company of Arſpacia; as ſhe thought from a good play a young woman might riſe wiſer or better; though ſhe never went herſelf. She would ſay, that the world to her was like an exhauſted flower, its ſweets were gone; and as I

judge of the value of things, would ſhe continue, by my term in them, ſo pleaſure now holds but a very low price in my eſtimation: ſhe would ſometimes, with a ſmile, ſay, the world, that thoroughly knows its own intereſt, always quits old people; I wiſh they would take the hint, and quit the world; I do not mean, ſaid ſhe, to have them abſolutely interred, but only buried to the publick diverſions of the town.

I muſt inform my readers, that one day in every week we ſpent with Hortenſius and Arſpacia; and they did the ſame with us; and there was always a full aſſembly at both houſes: one afternoon the converſation turned upon the ſubject of happineſs; a lady in company made a very trite obſervation, that happineſs was only opinion; to which Hortenſius anſwered, he thought happineſs was any pleaſure that would bear reflection.

To this Portia ſaid, that ſhe begged leave to differ both from the lady and Hortenſius; and firſt as to the lady, that called it only an opinion; for, ſaid ſhe, if that is once admitted, happineſs muſt be a vague airy notion only, as it depended on every ſingle individual judgment; and two thirds of mankind appeared by their actions to be incapable of forming any judgment.

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As to Hortenſius, he was undoubtedly right in his firſt principle; but then he had confined happineſs to pleaſure only; which, ſhe ſaid, ſhe could by no means admit; for,

* True happineſs ne'er enter'd at an eye;
True happineſs reſides in things unſeen:
No ſmiles of fortune ever bleſt the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob innocence of joys;
That jewel wanting—triple crowns are poor.

Portia continued, and ſaid, though ſhe herſelf was now in poſſeſſion of real happineſs, yet it was not in her power to define it; but the whole company being unanimous in deſiring her ſentiments upon this ſubject; ſhe immediately complied; and thus began;

Happineſs conſiſts in that health of body which is founded on temperance and exerciſe, and a tranquility of mind that reſults from innocency and virtue; it requires ſo much of the goods of life as will ſatisfy its own natural wants, and ſome to ſpare for the relief of other people; juſt as much pleaſure as will keep the heart chearful, and the eye ſerene; and as much knowledge as will fill up the intervals of ſociety with a pleaſing, but not a too an-

* Dr. Young's Night-Thoughts.

xious contemplation; this, ladies and gentlemen, is my opinion, or rather the beſt definition I am capable of making of happineſs; and, if you admit it, I believe you will join with me in ſaying, that it is within a very narrow compaſs, that the divine providence has placed the ſum total of rational life, that all degrees of the human ſpecies might in ſome meaſure partake.

How eaſy is this to obtain, if we would but give ourſelves leave; and yet, alas, how ſolicitous are we to overlook this golden mean: we ſuffer our weak imaginations to ſeduce us, and we place all our happineſs in pomp, magnificence, equipage, and expence; and we affix ſhame, infamy, and reproach on poverty; and here indeed we tread mechanically in the ſteps of our forefathers; but ſurely, for our own ſakes, we ſhould exert our underſtandings, and emerge from this darkneſs; for we do not conſider, that while we are thus waſting the ſands of life in ſuch abſurd and ſelf-tormenting fancies, that we ſtand ſtupidly inſenſible of far more exalted pleaſures, than is in the power of wealth and grandeur to purchaſe; the great and dazzling luſtre of the heavens, the beautiful verdure of the earth, woods, plants, and flowers; in ſhort, nature, in all her vaſt variety of charms,

charms, addreſſing herſelf with all her eloquence to every ſenſe, courting us to lengthen life by innocent enjoyments, which ſhe freely offers to all without money, though far above all price; for, as doctor Young has elegantly expreſſed it,

What makes man wretched?—happineſs deny'd?
Lorenzo no;—'tis happineſs diſdained;
She comes too meanly dreſſed to win our ſmile,
And calls herſelf content,—a homely name;
Our flame is tranſport, and content our ſcorn:
Life's modeſt joys we ruin, while we raiſe,
And all our extaſies are wounds to peace,
Peace—the full portion of mankind below.

Here Portia ended; and the whole company returned her their thanks for her ſyſtem of happineſs, which now appeared to all preſent to be in their own power; but they were interrupted by the appearance of a lady, whom I ſhall call Mrs. Mode-love; ſhe was the wife of a gentleman of great merit, good-nature, and large fortune; he had, when he was very young, married her; her fine perſon only raiſed her to this dignity, for he took her from the dregs of mankind; and perhaps this was the only action of his whole life,

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for which even his enemies could call his judgment in queſtion: this ſudden exaltation, at firſt, as I have been told, quite turned her head; and indeed at this time ſhe appeared to be giddy with her greatneſs.

Not that ſhe wanted a good underſtanding; for this was by no means the caſe; but her vanity and affectation prevented this excellence from appearing to advantage; not a feature, nor a limb, but what was diſtorted, as if ſhe had been all over convulſed, and her very voice was often ſo altered, that ſhe was quite unintelligible. As Mr. Mode-love was a ſenator, and a true patriot, ſo the good of his country engroſſed all his attention; and his elegant lady amuſed herſelf in the manner that ſhe thought moſt agreeable; and this conſiſted chiefly in adorning her own delicate perſon, and the decorations of her houſe, in both of which ſhe ſpared neither time nor expence: as ſhe kept a great deal of what is commonly called the beſt company, ſo ſhe was perfectly acquainted with all that was doing in town, and, very obligingly, upon her coming in, gave Portia a liſt of the diverſions and entertainments that were then in vogue: every body preſent, I believe, admired the ſtrength of her memory; and ſome among them

them wiſhed ſhe had put it to a better uſe: when this was over, ſhe remained ſilent, as not knowing what to ſay; and then agreeably ſuprized the company, by ſhewing ſhe had juſt ſenſe enough to take her leave of people ſhe could not entertain, and by whom ſhe would not improve.

To prevent any wrong impreſſion that her fine figure might make on Cornelia, Portia, turning to her, ſaid, whatever is the predominant paſſion of the mind engroſſes all its faculties, and every thing is neglected to indulge it: thus it has happened to be the ambition of Mrs. Modelove to commence a modern belle; dreſs, equipage, balls, operas, maſquerades, with a long train of et cæteras, is her only buſineſs, while good ſenſe, and the improvement of her underſtanding, is totally undervalued; all her thoughts, her time, and money, are employed to adorn her perſon, and her mind ſinks into depravity, inſtead of receiving the leaſt embelliſhment; and hence perhaps ariſes a reaſon for what has often occaſioned me ſome ſpeculation, that I have ſcarcely ever met with a celebrated beauty that had common ſenſe; and to people who live abſtracted from what is called the gaiety of the town, or rather, I think, I may ſay, who are not intoxicated with its fol-

lies, the ridiculous ambition of ſuch a character will meet with the utmoſt contempt.

But I muſt now, continued Portia, warn you in a particular manner, my dear Cornelia, againſt vanity and affectation, the faults that are moſt apparent in Mrs. Mode-love, and of which our ſex are but with too much juſtice generally accuſed. Monſieur St. Evremont, a man of as much gallantry as ever his gay nation produced, has carried his raillery on this ſubject as far as it will go; and from hence we may learn, that it was in his days the reigning foibles of the fair; and we have great reaſon to believe it is not leſſened in ours.

As the love of praiſe is certainly implanted in our boſoms, as a ſtrong incentive to worthy actions, I therefore confeſs, it is a very difficult taſk to get above a deſire of it, in things that our reaſon and judgment tell us, we ought to be wholly indifferent to; for we ſeldom give ourſelves time to diſtinguiſh in theſe points, in ſo nice a manner as they deſerve; of this nature are all graces in our perſons, our dreſs, and our deportment; which will be engaging and attractive if we think not of them, but loſe their force in proportion to our en-

deavours to make them ſuch; for when we give the paſſion for praiſe an unbridled liberty, our pleaſure in little trifling perfections, robs us of what is due to us for great virtues and worthy qualities. The beſt way to get clear of affectation, or to give it a ſofter name, of a light fondneſs for applauſe, is to take care to throw off the love of it upon all occaſions that are not in themſelves laudable. When our conſciouſneſs turns upon the main deſign of life, and our thoughts are employed upon the chief purpoſe, we ſhall never betray an affectation, for we cannot be guilty of it; and if we are permitted to meaſure faults by the greatneſs of the puniſhment, there are few of a higher ſize than affectation, as there is ſcarce a greater penalty, than that of being continually laughed at. The very ingenious Mr. Addiſon, who, I preſume, it will be allowed me, knew human nature perfectly well, has aſſured us, that no woman can be handſome by the force of features alone, and that a beauty, conſidered meerly as ſuch, is only an object of ſight, and may be allowed to amuſe as a picture, but never to triumph in a higher capacity. If his doctrine ſhould ever take effect, I fear, many fine ladies would be abridged of their power, and find themſelves ſud-

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denly reduced to a piece of painted canvaſs; this is conveying ſo degrading an idea of our ſexes, that I would hope every woman of true ſpirit would diſdain it, and exert thoſe faculties heaven has bleſſed her with, to become a rational creature. I cannot, however, forbear making one obvious remark upon what this great man has aſſerted; which is this. That the generality of men are in one ſenſe Platonick lovers, ſo far as to allow the greateſt beauty lies in the mind; it is poſſible, indeed, that a moſt angelic form may ſo dazzle at firſt ſight, that the want of mental beauty, and the deformity of affectation may not appear; but you are always to remember, that time, that great diſcoverer of all things, will remove the film from the lover's eyes, and then he will behold things as they really are. Portia was going on, but the enterance of three ladies put a ſtop to her converſation.

Theſe ladies were as remarkable for their ſtrict attachment to each other, as by the peculiarity of their characters; Mrs. Allgood, whom I ſhall begin with, was a maiden lady, of good family, good fortune, and good ſenſe; but had taken a turn to talk of religion upon all occaſions, and in all companies. She talked a great deal, and what is extraordinary, ſhe talk-

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ed well; but she talked for fame, she professed herself a member of the church of England, as by law established, but her doctrine was much more severe than any tenets that our church enjoins; she had read a great deal, but they were all books of devotion; and said, those people must have bad hearts indeed, that were capable of receiving any amusement, but from treatises of religion. She was a most inveterate enemy to the stage; the theatre, she called a temple consecrated to the infernal deity; and said, that she believed, neither St. Paul, when at Rome, nor any of the apostles ever frequented it, or any other public entertainments; not by the way, that Mrs. Allgood was averse to private ones, with her select friends; for the pleasures of the table she thought very innocent. She informed the company upon her first coming in, that she had taken the tuition of her dear friend, Mrs. Flutter's daughter, a child of eight years old, and was then teaching her a system of theology, in which this young lady was a great proficient. In short, not to tire my readers, Mrs. Allgood was a perfect devotee; as her character appeared to Cornelia to be of a mixed nature, with something of novelty in it, so she begged of Arspacia to give her a little information

about

about this lady; to which Aſpicia replied, I believe, Mrs. Allgood has ſome great virtues; but I doubt, whether vanity, like a rank weed, doth not overſhadow thoſe fair flowers; at leaſt, I fear ſhe is not quite ſo much ſpiritualized, as ſhe would have the world believe; and as, perhaps, ſhe herſelf thinks the goddeſs fame relates ſome anecdotes about her, which Mrs. Allgood's admirers ſay, was invented by a coquet, who told it to envy, the elder ſiſter of ill-nature; the purport of which is, that Mrs. Allgood is not yet quite all ſoul, but has ſome infirmities of the fleſh ſtill hanging about her.

Portia then ſpoke, and ſaid, you may be wiſe, Cornelia, without vanity; for wiſdom doth not require ſo much outward ſhew, as inward ſecurity; you may be prudent, without being a prude; for I would have your modeſty accompanied with an innocent gaiety, and your reſerve with great good-nature; apply yourſelf to learn what will embelliſh your mind, but let not vanity attend your knowledge. As to your philoſophy, I would have it wholly chriſtian; make your own heart good, but be not too ſevere upon the failings of your fellow-creatures, who differ, perhaps, only in trifles from you; be affable and obliging to every perſon

you

you converſe with, but intimate with none; behave without the leaſt pride to thoſe people, whom heaven has made your inferiors, either in fortune or underſtanding; remember, that the principles of chriſtianity put all the world on the ſame foot. In ſhort, ſaid ſhe, I would have you do nothing, but what is truly praiſe-worthy, but without vanity; for the oſtentation of a good action, often eclipſes the glory which it would otherwiſe deſerve. It is with a great pleaſure, my dear Cornelia, continued Portia, that I ſee in you an emulation to raiſe yourſelf a character by which you may be diſtinguiſhed; I love, ſaid ſhe, to ſee an eagerneſs for precedence in virtue in young people, but beware of vanity, the leaſt tincture of it poiſons all the virtues; an inſtance of which you have juſt ſeen in Mrs. Allgood: be not therefore too fond of applauſe; yet a deſire to be well thought of by the wiſe and good, I do not blame; no, I recommend it to you, for their approbation is like a glory round about a woman's head, it is an ornament, as well as a reward of her virtues.

And it is therefore, my dear Cornelia, that in all your actions I beg you to aim at the higheſt perfection; form no project, ſet about nothing, without ſaying to your-

ſelf

ſelf, could I not do better: by this means, you will inſenſibly contract a habit of juſtice and virtue, which will make the practice eaſy to you. Here Portia ended, and Cornelia aſſured her, that ſhe would endeavour always to make her precepts the rule of her conduct; but as I fear ſome of my fair readers may grow tired of ſtaying ſo long, in what, perhaps, they may call ſtupid moralizing company, where there is no ſcandal to enliven the converſation, not one pretty fellow introduced, who by well-timed flattery would raiſe their ſpirits; and above all, where the ſtupendous ſcience of whiſk was in no eſtimation; theſe things, I apprehend, may oblige them to call for their Eau de Luce; and, as I would do all in my power to prevent both the importation and conſumption of French commodities; for as we are now at war with the power, I wiſh we was ſo with the manners of that gay people; therefore, to relieve ſuch readers, I ſhall here conclude this chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The characters and reflections upon them continued. Hortensius and Arspacia go out of town. Portia and Cornelia prepare to follow them.

TO those of my fair readers, who was tired with my last chapter, I ought to make an apology for again presuming to present them with the same subject; but I beg leave to remind them, that in the character of an authoress, it is my duty to endeavour to please every reader; and I have now both the honour and the happiness to know some ladies, to whom it would give the most supreme delight to see a reformation made in their whole sex; this indeed would be a public good; for I am thoroughly perswaded, that if the female world would once take the lead, and amend their behaviour and manners, that the male world would soon follow their example. For this very good reason, that then it would be their interest so to do, for they would not only find the advantage of this in their own wives, daughters, and sisters, but they would then know, that a large estate, or a fine person, or a glittering title, would be looked on but as secondary recom-

recommendations, that the man of the ſtricteſt honour, juſtice, morality, and religion would always be preferred; they would then change the form of their attack, and inſtead of decorating their own perſons, would turn all their thoughts on the embelliſhments of their minds and manners; as knowing that the only way ever to be ſucceſsful with the fair. Another national advantage ariſing from a general reformation in the fair ſex is, that as I have, I hope, proved clearly, it would have a great influence upon the conduct of the men; for was the men more generally virtuous, they would be more truly valiant; the conſequence of which is, that we ſhould have no cowards either at ſea or land; for as Shakeſpear has long ago told us.

It is conſcience only that makes cowards of us all: what then could alarm the Britiſh nation; not Lewis le grand, as he is ſtiled by his ſycophants, with his army of petit maitres; for Engliſhmen would then all be brave, becauſe they would all be virtuous; and Engliſhwomen would all be fair, becauſe they all were good.

And the moſt effectual method, that I know of, to bring about this very deſireable end is, to take characters from real life, ſtrongly pointed, and then make

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ſome proper reflections upon them, that when a female mind ſees the leaſt analogy between the foible, folly, or fault, that is here repreſented, and what it feels in its own boſom; it may, by immediately amending what it is now convinced is abſolutely wrong, ſtrike out the ugly reſemblance, and ſo become at once both wiſe and good, according to the proverb, every one to mend one, and the work is done; but, perhaps, it will be objected, that I am not equal to this undertaking, that I have no talent for drawing, that my colours are bad, and that the moſt I deſerve but the name of a vile dawber, fit only to attempt a ſign-poſt.

As it is very probable there may be truth in this charge, ſo I ſhall not go about to defend myſelf, but only humbly offer to their conſideration my intention; which, in ſpite of criticiſm is good; and as the intention is, what only ſtamps a merit upon any action, ought therefore principally to be regarded; ſo I hope the humane and good-natured part of my fair readers will permit the goodneſs of the deſign, to plead an excuſe for the badneſs of the execution. Without farther preface, therefore, I return to my characters.

I ſhall now preſent them with Mrs. Flutter, the ſecond of the three ladies

mentioned in the former chapter. Mr. Flutter, huſband to this lady, was a man of plain ſenſe, and moderate fortune; they had been married ſome years, but had only one child, the young lady before mentioned, to be placed under the care of Mrs. Allgood. As Mrs. Flutter profeſſed herſelf a modern fine lady, ſo, according to the invariable rules of that ſect, ſhe never condeſcended to the care of her family, or the performance of any domeſtic duties; this put Mr. Flutter under a neceſſity to ſtoop to offices which degraded his dignity, and brought him into contempt, and he loſt the eſteem of ſenſible people; for, alas! they did not know, that if he had not ordered his own dinner, his good lady would not have taken the trouble off his hands; as Mr. Flutter was a ſtranger to the œconomy of a houſhold, ſo it is not to be wondered at, that he was groſly impoſed on; and though his received character was that of a miſer; yet it was notorious, that he lived greatly above his income. To account for this ſeeming paradox, I muſt return to Mrs. Flutter; ſhe had both a native and an acquired folly, though the latter bore much the greater ſhare; her head was a perfect triangle, equally divided between religion, metaphyſicks, and

the fashion; the first of these was owing to her intimacy with Mrs. Allgood; Mrs. Flutter not only therefore talked about religion in all companies, but made it the subject of her letters to her acquaintance; and yet by her conduct it did not appear, that religion had the least influence on any of her actions; from whence I judge, it was then only in her head, for at that time it certainly had not reached her heart; as to her passion for metaphysicks, it was easily accounted for, by acquainting my readers, that she almost adored Mrs. Surface, who was a professed metaphysician; and Mrs. Flutter considered this lady in a very high light; for, I believe, she thought her wiser than Solomon himself; as to the fashion indeed, she was entirely governed in that particular by her two prime ministers, her milliner, and mantua-maker; these people were absolutely necessary to her peace and happiness, as they had it both in their power and inclination, to relieve Mrs. Flutter from two very heavy burdens, her time and her money; both of those very valuable things she was always glad to dispose of. She piqued herself on her maternal tenderness, which all consisted in adorning the outside of the little favourite; for her mind lay like a barren waste,

quite uncultivated, till Mrs. Allgood extended her charity to this fair flower, as before obſerved.

Whenever Mrs. Flutter ſpoke of her huſband, it was to ridicule him, for ſhe ſaid, he was an non-entity; and by this means, without intending it, I am very ſure ſhe took the moſt effectual method to convey to the company the loweſt opinion of her own underſtanding: when ſhe talked with him, even before her common friends, ſhe would tell him, ſhe hated him. The firſt time Cornelia heard this, ſhe was aſtoniſhed beyond meaſure, to find it poſſible, for a well-bred woman to be guilty of ſo great an indecency; but ſhe has ſince been told, her ſurprize was owing only to her want of knowledge of what was daily practiced in the polite world; by ladies, whoſe birth, fortune, and education entitle them to give laws to all below their own quality; and who are ſuperior to any reflections that can be made by Plebeians on their conduct; if this is a fact, and there are really ſuch ladies in the world, I ſhall take leave to tell them, that this proof of their ſincerity, in acquainting the gentlemen, who have the misfortune of being their huſbands, with what all the world knew before, can plead no excuſe for their want of good manners,

manners, and the delicacy that ought to be inſeparable from the ſex; and if ſuch ladies will voluntarily diveſt themſelves of their dignity, and aſſume the language and behaviour of their menial ſervants, they muſt expect to be treated as ſuch; for let a woman's quality be ever ſo high, or her fortune ever ſo large, unleſs ſhe is diſtinguiſhed by ſomething more than her dreſs, ſhe has beſtowed her time to no purpoſe; as to Mrs. Flutter, ſhe was too much the modern fine lady, to admit of ſuch a vulgar thing, as affection for a huſband; no, her heart was wholly engroſſed by that faſhionable thing, called female friendſhip; and, which indeed is now conſtituted in the room of almoſt every virtue, by theſe ſame friends, who are always loud in their applauſes of each other; in this particular, Mrs. Flutter was a perfect enthuſiaſt; huſband, child, health, reputation, fortune, all was to be ſacrificed at once, if they came in competition with her dear friends. Mrs. Flutter appeared by her dreſs at this viſit, to have ranſacked the whole globe to decorate her perſon; at leaſt, it was plain no expence was ſpared that could augment the gaudy appearance. As her perſon was really fine, ſo ſhe had the good nature to give it gratis; that being a part,

I think, of the preſent faſhion. Upon her firſt coming in, Hortenſius obſerved to a gentleman who ſat near him, that he thought Mrs. Flutter like our firſt parent Eve before the fall; for though ſhe was naked, ſhe was not aſhamed; to which the gentleman replied, that undoubtedly it was part of the curſe pronounced upon mankind, that the females ſhould have no ſhame. This was a very ſevere cenſure, and I wiſh the ladies of the preſent age would make it appear, it had no foundation in truth; I muſt therefore once more addreſs my fair country-women, and beg them to amend their whole conduct; and by ſetting a good example to the male part of the creation, they will, in ſome meaſure, wipe out that indeliable blot upon our characters; for it is notorious, that the woman was the firſt in the tranſgreſſion; it is therefore incumbent upon us now to take the road to virtue; for if we longer neglect doing it, I apprehend the men will ſay, that the ſerpent, by ſeducing Eve, took poſſeſſion of the whole ſex ever after.

And here I cannot forbear recommending to my fair readers a certain ornament, a great deal out of uſe, it is true, but, therefore, not the leſs becoming, called modeſty; I ſay, an ornament, as it really is, and perhaps was I to call it a virtue,

ſome of my readers might object to the uſing it; I do aſſure them, ſolemnly, it is the moſt becoming habit they can poſſibly put on, for modeſty has great advantages; it always ſets off beauty, nay, it gives an agreeable ſhade to even uglineſs itſelf. I have ſomewhere met with a little fable to this purpoſe, and ſhall, for the benefit of my fair readers, give it them as perfect as my memory will permit me now to do.

A FABLE.

IT is ſaid, that when Jupiter formed the paſſions in the human breaſt, he aſſigned every one of them its diſtinct abode; modeſty, however, was forgot: ſhe was upon her petition at laſt introduced to him, but as he could not tell where to place her, he therefore allowed her always to accompany the great virtues; ever ſince that time ſhe is inſeparably from them. She is the friend of truth, and betrays the lie that dare attack it; ſhe is a conſtant attendant upon good ſenſe; ſhe is in ſtrict union with love, and often proclaims it; in a word, ſhe is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to beauty, that ſhe loſes her charms, whenever ſhe appears without modeſty. So much for fable.

I would therefore adviſe my fair readers, to let the chief part of their finery be modeſty; and I will likewiſe tell them one ſerious truth, that attracted by the amiable appearance of modeſty, I have heard gentlemen declare, they have diſcovered great beauty, where they otherwiſe would not have ſearched for it.

As ſoon as Mrs. Flutter had left the apartment, Portia turning to Cornelia, ſaid, I doubt not but this lady's behaviour has occaſioned you great ſpeculation, as indeed it juſtly might; and tho' you have been before-hand with me in your reflexions on her conduct in general, yet I muſt beg leave to make a few remarks on ſome particulars; and the rather, as it is poſſible they may hereafter be of ſervice to you; and, firſt, if fate allots you to a happy marriage, make the bleſſing permanent by love, and the conſtant practice of all the female virtues; if, on the contrary, you are unfortunately married, and your mind is torn and diſtracted with the agonies of domeſtic jars, ſeek relief from him, who alone can extricate us out of the deepeſt diſtreſs: if you love your huſband paſſionately, as was my own caſe, and he but ill return your tenderneſs; let mildneſs, complaiſance, and a blameleſs conduct be the only arms that you

combat

combat his ill humour with; for a contrary method will only irritate him the more and, I am very positive, can never regain a heart liable to wandering; but, above all things, let not the badness of your husband's behaviour, or his particular ill usage of you, ever draw you into the least irregularity; so far from talking of your husband's faults yourself, I would have you shun all opportunities of hearing of them, and, as much as possible, be blind to them; for your discretion and silence will here be the most prevailing reproof; an affected ignorance is seldom a virtue, and yet in this case it would be a great one; and if your husband is a sensible man, he will see how unwilling you are to be uneasy; and there cannot be a stronger argument to persuade him not to be unjust to you; nay, it is highly probable, your example may in time teach him to correct all his irregular passions, and at last entirely convert him; and surely there is nothing so glorious to a wife as a victory so gained; for a man, reclaimed from any bad habits in this manner, will ever after be subjected to her virtue, and the wife's patience, for a time, is rewarded by a triumph that will continue as long her life: I have always thought, that a wife never appeared in a more truly ridiculous light, than when she made her husband's faults or follies the

ſubject of her converſation; one would imagine, ſuch women expected the town ſhould riſe up in arms to take their parts; but the conſequence always is, that they are brought up in all companies as the reigning jeſt, and continue ſo till ſome newer folly comes upon the Stage to their relief.

I make no doubt, Cornelia, continued Portia, but you ſee all the errors of Mrs. Flutter's conduct in regard to her daughter; and, in caſe heaven ſhould ever ſee fit to bleſs you with a family, I ſhall take leave to ſay ſomething on that ſubject to you.

Firſt then, a woman's tenderneſs to her children is one of the moſt ſincere evidences of her virtue; but yet I would have the manner of expreſſing this affection ſubject to the rules of good breeding; and though a woman of faſhion ought not to be leſs kind to them than mothers of the loweſt rank in life are to theirs, yet ſhe muſt diſtinguiſh herſelf in the manner, and avoid the ordinary methods; you muſt begin early to make your children love you, that they may obey you: to be diſpleaſed for their own good, is a maxim young people are very ſlow in underſtanding; ſo that you are always to conclude, that the thoughts of your children have no ſmall mixture of mutiny in them, which, being

being natural, you muſt not be angry at, becauſe that will increaſe it; when you cannot avoid chiding, do it gently; but, if it is poſſible, rather flatter away their ill humour, and take the firſt opportunity, after this, of pleaſing them in ſomething that they did not expect; this will ſtrengthen your authority, by making it ſoft, and confirm their obedience, by making it their intereſt; above all things, never be in a paſſion, either with or before your children, for this is giving them a licence to do the ſame; you muſt therefore keep as ſtrict a guard upon yourſelf before your children as if you was amongſt your enemies; for all children have a ſhortneſs of thought, owing to the weakneſs of their judgments, and are very apt to make wrong inferences of what you ſay; and by this means they leſſen their duty to you, and extend their liberty farther than is convenient to themſelves; let them therefore ſtand more in awe of your affection than of your power: in one word, I give it you as my opinion, that you are to act by your children as by your huſband; let your behaviour be ſuch to him, that he may not only have the greateſt affection to your perſon, but that he may eſteem you as his firſt friend, and prefer you before any other relation or acquaintance he

has in the whole world. I have dwelt the longer on this ſubject, as it appears by the conduct of the ladies of the preſent age, that they have entirely given up the pleaſing employment of forming the infant minds of their children: but, notwithſtanding the force of faſhion, this is undoubtedly a duty incumbent on every mother, and much more ſo than that of forming and adorning their bodies; as to this laſt particular indeed we do not ſeem to be wanting, if we are to judge by the great increaſe of theſe female ſeminaries amongſt us now called boarding-ſchools, where, for only treble the intereſt of the daughter's fortune, the mother is at once delivered from all trouble, till the young lady's underſtanding is arrived at a pitch capable of attaining the inſtructions of that profound maſter in the ſtupendous ſcience of whiſt, the ever-memorable Mr. Hoyle; and indeed, in the age we now live in, which will undoubtedly be recorded in the annals of fame for wiſdom, it is not to be wondered at that this ſhould happen early in life, and that a young lady, if ſhe gives a ſtrict application to the inſtructions of this wonderful and truly great maſter, ſhould, after three or four years, and that too at an age when our grandmothers would have thought her only fit to be reading her teſta-

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ment, be thoroughly accompliſhed, and the whole plan of her education, by the aſſiſtance of this uſeful man, ſo entirely finiſhed, that ſhe will be capable of acquitting herſelf properly in what is commonly called the beſt company in England.

I muſt beg your patience, my dear Cornelia, a little longer, ſaid Portia, as there is one very material part in Mrs. Flutter's character that I have not yet touched, I mean her want of œconomy, and her total neglect of the care of her family; a woman that is guilty of theſe faults brings herſelf under a cenſure much heavier than the trouble ſhe would avoid; and indeed, ſuch a woman is rather an incumbrance than a help to any family ſhe is at the head of: this I am very ſure of, that no reſpect is laſting, but that which is produced by our being in ſome meaſure uſeful to thoſe that pay it; and upon this principle, even the regard of the children and ſervants will not be paid to a lady who thinks them below her notice, and not worth her care: do you therefore, my dear Cornelia, be very careful, that you do not carry your politeneſs to that height, nor practice the preſent faſhion to that degree, as to be good for nothing: a gentleman's province is certainly without doors, and the œconomy of a houſe is in ſome meaſure there-

fore

fore indecent for him, which makes this duty fall wholly upon the wife; and yet the art of laying out money wiſely is not attained, I aſſure you, without a great deal of thought; and this is more difficult ſtill in the caſe of a married woman, who is accountable to her lord and maſter for all her miſtakes in this particular; for it is not only his money, but his character too is at ſtake, if what comes under his lady's care is managed improperly; your huſband's temper then muſt here be your chief direction; when once you know his mind, it will juſtify your part in the management; if he is pleaſed with it, you may be quite eaſy, for he is your guarantee to the world.

In regard to your own dreſs and appearance, which is an article of great expence, generally ſpeaking, among the ladies, take this for a maxim, that nothing is truly fine but what is fit and proper for your circumſtances; for if once you break thro' this rule, you will launch into a wide ſea of extravagance; every thing will become neceſſary, only becauſe you have a mind to it; but remember the proverb, that children and fools want every thing, becauſe they want ſenſe to diſtinguiſh; and there cannot be a ſtronger evidence of a weak underſtanding, than the making too large a

catalogue of things that are neceſſary; when, upon a ſtrict examination, it will be found, there are but few things that come under that denomination; and I am very certain, that, in this great town, there is more money given to be laughed at, than for any one thing in the world; though I am as certain the purchaſers do not think ſo; for, I do aſſure you, the world is the moſt favourable to us, when we acquit ourſelves in that manner which is moſt agreeable to our ſtations in it. Mrs. Flutter's great argument upon this ſubject always was, ſhe muſt be like other people: if you once indulge this notion, it will carry you a great way; never mind the wants that vanity alone creates; no, my Cornelia, I would inſpire you with a nobler ambition; allow no body to practice all the great virtues in a higher degree than yourſelf; for be aſſured, that poorneſs of mind is worſe than poverty of fortune; be always therefore ſenſible of the neceſſity of virtue; good ſenſe, Cornelia, is a glaring equipage, if you chuſe to make a figure; and great virtue the moſt ſhining ornament you can poſſibly wear; the only point that I think a woman can diſtinguiſh herſelf in to any advantage is œconomy: it would indeed have been happy, if Mrs. Flutter's fortune had been ſuch, as to make all computations

of her income unneceſſary; but as I believe hers is not large, ſo it is incumbent on her, by all means, to be diſcreet in the article of expence; for where people do not obſerve a moderation in this particular, they will ſoon ſee their affairs in diſorder; indeed, where œconomy is once laid aſide, you can anſwer for nothing: not that I would have you, my Cornelia, covetous; and though I recommend regularity, I am a profeſſed enemy to avarice, which is of little uſe, and diſhonours all perſons, brings them into contempt, and makes them deſpiſed: all that I aim at, is to perſuade you to ſuch a management and regularity, as will avoid the ſhame and injuſtice which always attends a careleſs conduct; let you make yourſelf ever ſo fine, gay, and glittering, I do aſſure you, Cornelia, you will find yourſelf often exceeded by your inferiors; therefore I would adviſe, that in your houſe you might have every thing elegantly uſeful, which, with a full attendance, is not ſo eaſily imitated by people below you.

Hortenſius then ſpoke, and ſaid, that he knew few things more truly ridiculous, than the vanity of appearing greater than we are, and which, ſaid he, is always attended with fatal conſequences at laſt, and in the interim makes our lives wretchedly uneaſy, and

and never anſwers our deſigns; for we have as many people who calculate our eſtates or fortunes with our expences, as we have acquaintance; the world ſees through us; and, inſtead of paying us the reſpect which we endeavour to purchaſe by our ruin, we only furniſh matter for ridicule, and make ourſelves the jeſt of all who know us; and thus we laviſh our eſtates to deceive ourſelves: it has been the endeavour of wiſe men in all ages, continued Hortenſius, to retrench the evils of life; but it is the cuſtom of fools to increaſe them. Arſpacia then ſaid, Cornelia, you know Brillante: laſt birth-day ſhe appeared at court in a rich gold brocade ſuit of cloaths; and ſhe vainly imagined, that all who took notice of her dreſs admired her fancy, and conceived very advantageous ideas of her fortune; when, in reality, they remarked her only for an idle, extravagant fooliſh young woman, in the high road to ruin and beggary; ſhe was therefore laughed at by the ill-natured, and pitied by the more humane: this lady, ſaid ſhe, is always a ſlave to the preſent mode, be it what it will; and indeed the generality of the ladies of the preſent age are in ſuch a ſtate of bondage, that I have often thought, that if they had been formed by nature, what they ridiculouſly make themſelves

ſelves by art and faſhion, they would look upon themſelves as the moſt wretched of all created beings. Arſpacia here was obliged to ſtop; for at this moment entered two ladies, whom I ſhall call Liſetta and Flavia: Liſetta was the daughter of a country gentleman, who lived in the neighbourhood of Hortenſius; ſhe would have been little remarked, had it not been for Flavia, into whoſe acquaintance ſhe fell when ſhe was very young; Flavia was of low birth, ſhe wanted not ſenſe, and ſhe had a kind of native cunning which was of infinite uſe to her, as it ſupplied the place of wiſdom; ſhe had, by ſome fortunate accidents, been thrown early in life into good company, which opportunity ſhe had improved; and the ſame lucky events, by which ſhe had at firſt emerged out of darkneſs, ſtill attending her, ſhe was at this time poſſeſſed of an eaſy fortune, which ſhe daily increaſed, and which by birth ſhe had no title to.

Flavia had once been very handſome; but was now more than young; the cruelty that had taken poſſeſſion of her heart in her bloom, was by time hardened into a ſtoical ſeverity againſt the male part of the creation; ſhe therefore entered herſelf a member of the ſociety of female friends, a ſect now much in vogue amongſt us;

and

and here indeed ſhe had an opportunity of exerting her talents to the utmoſt; for one of their tenets is, as I have been informed, never to ſuffer a friend to marry, except for intereſt only, that the wife may be the better enabled to continue and increaſe her favours to her female friend, who ſtill holds the firſt place in her heart: in purſuance of this truly laudable ſcheme, Flavia had been long hunting down an old baronet for her dear friend Liſetta, though he had hitherto eſcaped her toils. All ladies of this order of female friends are perfect Platos in petticoats; for they are not ſufficiently qualified to be admitted into the ſociety, except their philoſophy is great enough to make them deſpiſe all innocent diverſions: they look down upon the ſtage as affording nothing worthy of their attention; and though they go oftener to the theatre than other people, yet it is purely to oblige their acquaintance, and contrary to their inclination: another of their tenets, which they religiouſly hold, is to lay all their particular friends under contribution, which they effectually perform by artfully applying oil of fool, of which indeed they are very liberal. As it is poſſible ſome of my fair readers may really be ſtrangers to this wonder-working oil; though I am pretty confident, thoſe that

are not ſo will pretend ignorance; however, for the benefit of the former, I ſhall acquaint them, that the principal ingredients are, groſs flattery, mixed up with ſyrup of civility, ſome acid ſpirit of ſcandal, and a great deal of the tincture of ſelf-love: by the right application of this compoſition theſe female friends are enabled to live in an elegant manner, often indeed ſuperior to their patroneſs who beſtows the favours: but it would be tireſome to my readers to enter into a particular detail of all the arts practiſed by theſe people; and beſides, I am myſelf a ſtranger to many of them; ſo ſhall only ſay, Flavia was ſoon ſenſible, that ſhe had got into very improper company; for her talents did not here appear to any advantage; ſhe therefore reminded Liſetta, in a very polite manner, that they had a vaſt number of viſits to make, and by this means obliged her inſtantly to take her leave.

As ſoon as theſe ladies had left the apartment, Portia ſaid, I have before, Cornelia, warned you againſt particular friendſhips, as they are, you ſee, ſometimes very dangerous, and always extremely ridiculous: but, that I may not be thought too ſevere, I will give you my reaſons: it is very poſſible you may fix upon a lady for your friend, againſt whom the world has

has given judgment for ſome great fault, without your being acquainted with it; a reſemblance of inclination is none of the leaſt inducements to friendſhip; and you will be looked upon at leaſt as a well-wiſher, if not a partner with her in her faults; for you will not find the world ſo very good-natured, as to believe you averſe to her way of thinking, ſince it did not diſcourage you from admitting her to an intimacy; your ignorance of the lady's true character may leſſen the guilt, but will moſt certainly improve the jeſt upon you: do not then lay out your friendſhip too laviſhly; for you are reſponſible to the world, if you pitch upon a lady for your friend that is improper to be called ſo: another thing that I would recommend to you is, never to carry your friendſhip ſo far to your dear friend, as abſolutely to loſe your ſight becauſe ſhe is concerned: I confeſs malice is too quick-ſighted; but it doth not therefore follow that friendſhip muſt be blind; and if you do not obſerve a mean between theſe two extremes, your exceſs of good-nature will betray you into a very ridiculous figure; the beſt of theſe female friendſhips are not without their objections; but as it is impoſſible for you not to have acqaintance, I would recommend it to you to make choice of ſuch

people

people as are remarkable for good ſenſe, and great virtue; if you neglect doing this, your reputation may be hurt by their impertinence; I am ſpeaking now only of acquaintance, not of friends; but this will ſhew you how difficult a thing it is to meet with a true friend: I do not pretend to make a diſſertation on the ſubject, I only touch ſlightly on ſome duties of civil life; I refer you to your own heart, which will put you, I doubt not, upon acquiring all the virtues which will merit a ſincere friend; and then I ſhall beg of heaven to enrich you with that treaſure: you obſerved, Cornelia, continued Portia, I believe, the diſtinction that the ladies made to each other that have juſt left us; and the ſame you ſaw in Mrs. Flutter and Mrs. Allgood; this gives offence to the reſt of their acquaintance, becauſe it is injuring them in ſome degree by ſetting them at a diſtance, whilſt the dear friend only is to be careſſed: people, I aſſure you, very ſeldom forget ſuch treatment, therefore if ever formality is allowable, it is to be aſſumed here, that you may reſiſt the invaſion of ſuch forward women, as would preſs into your friendſhip and acquaintance, where, if once admitted, they will either be a ſnare or an incumbrance to you: here Portia ended; and there then came in a lady, who, by the impru-

imprudence of her conduct had given room for cenſure, though ſhe was believed to be ſtrictly innocent; Hortenſius then obſerved to Cornelia, that it was abſolutely neceſſary for every woman to make her life virtuous, and her conduct prudent; living well, ſaid he, does not ſilence calumny, but it certainly diſarms it; and, I believe, indiſcretion very often in women goes as far to give a ſcope for ſcandal, as real infamy; for the world judges from the public behaviour of you ladies, while they are ignorant of your private conduct and ſentiments. You are therefore very happy, Cornelia, continued Hortenſius, to have an opportunity of being a witneſs of the failings of other people, without erring yourſelf, and by that means make their ill example ſerve as a preſervative to your diſcretion.

Hortenſius had hardly finiſhed his laſt ſentence, when there came in Mrs. Sable, and her daughter Vergetta; Mrs. Sable was the daughter of one of the meaneſt mechanics; who, by raking, ſcraping, and denying himſelf the neceſſaries of life, amaſſed a fortune, that purchaſed his daughter a huſband of a genteel profeſſion; they had no other child but Vergetta, her intellects were by nature weak, ſhe was proud, haughty, and imperious;

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and as they gave her a fashionable education, so her understanding was not improved, nor her passions corrected; she looked down upon her equals in fortune, for as to birth she did not even condescend to think of them; she never was handsome, and was now pretty far advanced in life, but had just met with a necessitous man of quality, who, with a shattered constitution, had, for the sake of her fortune only, bestowed a title on her. But, as Pope says,

What can enoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas! — not all the blood of all the Howards.

This mushroom lady, with the magnificent Mrs. Sable, was the standing subject for contempt and ridicule. Mrs. Sable had entirely forgot her original, and was perpetually crowding herself into the company of people of quality, where she was sure to be laughed at. Her ladyship's title indeed had deprived her both of sight and memory, but it had not the same effect upon the company she now was permitted to keep, who saw the mean mechanic in every action. Her ladyship had her female friend, who, as

ſhe came from the dregs of the people, over acted her part, which ſhe thought was being polite; but it was believed his lordſhip would ſoon put an end to the farce.

But it is high time to preſent my readers with the character of Mrs. Surface, which I promiſed to give. Mrs. Surface was the daughter of a country gentleman, but was now married to a dignitary of the law; her huſband, a man of the greateſt merit, and an old particular friend of Portia's. As this gentleman had always ſpoke of Portia, not only with admiration, but with a degree of veneration; ſo it excited a deſire in his lady to be acquainted with ſo valuable a woman, not doubting but Portia was a profound metaphyſician; but how great was Mrs. Surface's ſurprize, upon her addreſſing herſelf to Portia in the ſtile of a metaphyſician, to hear her declare ſhe was an entire ſtranger to the ſcience. She then beheld her with a ſmile of contempt, and it is to be feared her huſband fell greatly in her eſteem, who could rank ſuch an illiterate creature in the liſt of ſenſible women; however, hoping to find greater encouragement from the gentlemen, ſhe turned to them, and began to talk upon the ſame ſubject; as they did not pay her

all the attention ſhe thought ſhe merited; ſo ſhe changed the form of her attack, and ſpoke to them in Greek. There was one among them who happened to be maſter of the language, and he very artfully flattered her vanity, and at the ſame time diverted the company at her expence; which, with all her profound learning, ſhe wanted ſenſe to diſcover; at laſt, one of the gentlemen aſked her in plain Engliſh, her opinion of Mr. Locke; to which ſhe anſwered, he knew nothing of the ſubject he pretended to write upon.

For, in the firſt place, ſhe could clearly demonſtrate, that his doctrine againſt innate ideas was abſolutely erroneous and falſe; and that the reaſons by which he attempts to prove, that privative cauſes can produce poſitive ideas in the mind, are equally trifling and abſurd.

And, in regard to the material difference there is between meditative and contemplative thought, he had ſhewn himſelf wholly incapable of illuſtrating that matter to the ſatisfaction of the learned world; and therefore, in her opinion, he was no metaphyſician.

This anſwer made the gentleman ſmile; but he could not forbear replying, with ſome warmth, that no perſon had ever treated the whole ſubject ſo clearly as Mr. Locke

Locke had done; and that he was, without diſpute, the greateſt man in that ſcience, this nation, or, he believed, any other had ever produced. This debate now ran high, Mrs. Surface was ſingle in her opinion, and the gentlemen were all unanimous; as ſhe found ſhe could not convince them, ſhe was determined to ſilence them; which ſhe effectually did, by aſſuring them, ſhe had now a book in the preſs, that would put the truth of what ſhe had been aſſerting, out of all diſpute; for ſhe had there confuted Mr. Locke in every one of his propoſitions, and indeed proved him a mere fool; for ſhe could ſay, without vanity, that no perſon underſtood the ſcience of metaphyſicks ſo well as herſelf; and ſhe hoped to ſee it more generally ſtudied by the ladies, for it was not only a great embelliſhment to a female mind, but of much more uſe than arithmetic, which was proper only for the vulgar, for it was below the attention of a woman of faſhion to ſtudy the properties and powers of numbers and numerical quantities; and to be what was called a good accomptant, ſhe thought a great reflection on any lady, as it was a qualification fit only for her ſervant; ſhe ſaid, the work ſhe had been engaged in, had coſt her an infinite deal of trouble and

time, but it would be of general utility to mankind, as it would ſhew them, that Mr. Locke knew nothing of the matter; and ſhe ſhould have the glory of opening their eyes, by letting all the world ſee the error they had hitherto been in; and ſhe doubted not, but ſucceeding ages would revere her name; for, though France had long boaſted of their Madame Dacier, England, now to her honour, had a Surface, whoſe fame would be immortal; and, who was as much ſuperior to that vain impertinent French woman, as that proud Gallican critick had been to the reſt of her ignorant ſex. After this rhapſody of nonſenſe ſhe looked contemptibly upon the ladies, but took leave of the gentlemen more politely; then hurrying to her coach, ordered it to drive to her printer's, that ſhe might haſten the publication of her voluminous compoſition of folly.

As this lady's abſurdity afforded the company a great deal of mirth, ſo I think it is neceſſary to acquaint my readers, that Mrs. Surface had, from her infancy, a natural vivacity with a lively imagination; this was miſtaken by the ſmall circle of her friends for wit; and as this flattered the vanity of a young mind, which is always apt to be elated upon the moſt trifling

ſling excellencies; ſhe would not reſt here, but was fired with an ambition to be thought a learned woman; ſhe therefore became miſtreſs, as ſhe called it, of the Latin and Greek languages, which ſhe learned like a parrot; the conſequence of this was, ſhe read all day long authors ſhe did not underſtand, till at laſt, like Don Quixote, ſhe fancied herſelf equal, if not ſuperior to the greateſt genius's of the age. This behaviour gave her huſband infinite concern, but alas, it was not in his power to prevent it, except he had confined her; ſhe took pains to expoſe herſelf in a particular manner always before company, and once when an archbiſhop dined with Mr. Surface, ſhe attacked his lordſhip ſo warmly upon the beloved ſcience of metaphyſicks, that his grace, in his own defence, was forced to make a diſſertation on a jelly, to deliver himſelf from the torrent of her folly and impertinence.

Arſpacia was the firſt that ſpoke after Mrs. Surface had left the company; ſhe ſaid, it was a very judicious obſervation of the duke de Rochefoucault, that we never appear ridiculous from our real, but from our affected characters; for this reaſon, ſaid ſhe, a woman ſhould always conſider her own genius, and never let her vanity get the better of her judgment; for a wo-

man that is neither a wit nor a ſcholar, may yet have an uſeful underſtanding; and if ſhe contents herſelf with ſeeming what ſhe really is, if ſhe doth not procure applauſe, ſhe will at leaſt avoid the imputation of impertinence.

To which Hortenſius anſwered, that to prevent people miſtaking their talents, he would recommend one maxim, which he wiſhed to ſee practiſed by both ſexes, which was only this; that they would have more ambition to ſhew the world, they had good hearts and juſt principles, than good heads, great learning, or fine genius; for it is not given to every perſon to excel in wit, humour, or a fine and elegant taſte in learning, but it is in every body's power to have virtue and honeſty; without theſe, all other accompliſhments are vain; and with theſe, without any other accompliſhments, we ſhould be honoured with the love and eſteem of mankind in general.

Portia then addreſſing herſelf to Cornelia, ſaid, moderate your fondneſs, my dear Cornelia, for extraordinary ſciences; they are very dangerous for a woman, and will teach you nothing, but a vaſt deal of vanity; guard yourſelf, therefore, againſt the inclination of ſetting up for a learned woman; you have all the knowledge that

is neceſſary for your well-being; therefore do not run after things that were not deſigned for you; but employ your time innocently, virtuouſly, and uſefully: before people engage in enquiries that are above their capacities, I think they ought to know the juſt extent of their own underſtandings, and what rule they have for determining this grand point; and yet this is a thing every body is ignorant of: do you therefore have courage enough not to deſire to know what really ſurpaſſes your underſtanding; by thus ſuppreſſing a reſtleſs and uſeleſs curioſity, you will prevent a vain opinion of yourſelf, and abate a confidence in your own ſenſe.

Know thyſelf, was a ſentence of advice which the ancients held in the higheſt veneration; the precept is ſhort indeed, but very full of inſtruction, both moral and divine; for whoever know themſelves, will reflect from whence they came, and conſequently adore and praiſe that power that gave them being: it will likewiſe lead them on to a conſideration of the relation wherein they ſtand, and what they owe to all mankind: it will alſo teach them what place they fill in the creation, and make them behave in ſuch a manner, as is moſt ſuitable to their rank and dignity: ſo that it comprehends our duty to

God, our neighbour, and ourſelves: and it is a thirſt after this knowledge only that I recommend to you, my dear Cornelia; for this will effectually deſtroy the ſeeds of pride, envy, cruelty, and impiety: but not to enter gravely into the ſubject, I ſhall only endeavour to ſhew you how the want of this moſt uſeful knowledge is the occaſion of thoſe follies, extravagancies, and abſurdities we daily ſee, and which are always attended with ridicule and contempt.

It is the want of this knowledge that makes people act out of character, and miſtake their talents, and then they commence ridiculous; for what can be more ſo, than to find ladies writing volumes in folio upon metaphyſics, and neglecting their families, and the education of their daughters; what can poſſibly be more ridiculous, than to find gentlemen of rank and fortune aſſociating themſelves with gamblers, pickpockets, jockeys, and grooms; or women, who pretend to virtue and reputation, continually at maſquerades, card-tables, or any other place but at home; who can forbear laughing at ſuch groſs abſurdities as theſe. Here Portia ended; and, as it was late, Hortenſius and Arſpacia took their leaves of Poria and Cornelia, as they intended to

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ſet out next morning for their ſeat in the country; and I will likewiſe relieve my readers from this tedious chapter.

CHAP. XI.

Portia gives Cornelia ſome inſtructions in regard to her conduct; they go into the country; the unexpected death of Hortenſius, followed by that of Arſpacia, and likewiſe the death of Portia; Cornelia marries; ſome account of Atticus and the blooming Clelia.

PORTIA and Cornelia ſaw Hortenſius and Arſpacia depart in the morning for their country-ſeat, which was about fourſcore miles from London: it was much earlier in the ſeaſon than people of their faſhion generally quit the town; but indeed their coming to London at all was, properly ſpeaking, only to grow weary of it, and that they might renew in themſelves the reliſh of a country life, of which they both were exceſſively fond; for Hortenſius and his lady were in poſſeſſion of true happineſs, which is of a retired nature; they found in each other every thing they wanted, and could therefore receive no addition from multitudes of ſpectators; Hortenſius was Arſpacia's boſom friend, and her chief companion in her ſolitude,

and was then as much the lover as when he first married her; they both abounded with good sense, consummate virtue, and a mutual esteem of each other, and were therefore a perpetual entertainment to one another: this picture of domestic happiness differs so much from what is practised in our days, that I fear many of my fair readers will consider it only as ideal; but I beg them to adorn themselves with the same virtues that Arspacia did, and then I doubt not but they will meet with a real Hortensius; but it is fashion now that generally governs the world; and there is a fashion in happiness, I am told, which I am certain is a false one; this sort of happiness loves crowds, and to draw the eyes of people upon them, because they cannot receive any applauses from their own breast; but it must all arise from the admiration of other people; this sort of happiness flourishes very much about the court, and in all publick assemblies, but loses its existence when it is not looked at; this is fashionable happiness; but, if they chuse to enjoy the real one, let them, like Arspacia, aspire after the virtues that are peculiar to their sex, follow their natural modesty, and think it their greatest commendation not to be talked of one way or the other.

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All ſtrictneſs of behaviour is ſo unmercifully laughed at in our age, that the other much worſe extreme is the more common folly; but I beg my fair countrywomen to aſk themſelves, which of theſe two offences a huſband would the more eaſily forgive, that of her not being ſo entertaining to company, occaſioned by her not having converſed ſo much in the gay world; or that of her behaving ſo faſhionably as to raiſe the inclinations of the room to his diſadvantage; and then ſhe will eaſily be able to form her own conduct. I have often thought, we have carried womens characters too much into publick life, as ladies now affect a ſort of fame; but I here cannot forbear telling them, that the utmoſt of a woman's character is contained in a domeſtick life; ſhe is blameable or praiſe-worthy, according as her behaviour affects the houſe and family of her father, or her huſband; all ſhe has to do in this world is contained within the duties of a daughter, a ſiſter, a wife, or a mother; and I think it very poſſible, that all theſe may be well performed, though a lady ſhould not be the very fineſt woman at an opera, or the very beſt whiſt-player in the whole kingdom; theſe duties are very conſiſtent with a moderate ſhare of common ſenſe, a clean but

plain dreſs, and a decent behaviour: at preſent the heads of my fair country-women are turned the wrong way; for they place their ambition on circumſtances, where to excel is no addition to what is truly commendable and praiſe-worthy: I believe indeed that beauty impoſes on the perſon that has it, and quite infatuates the mind; but let my readers remember, that there is but a very ſmall number of years difference between a fine woman and one that is no longer ſo; for few things are ſhorter than the reign of beauty; and nothing is more melancholy than the latter part of the lives of women, who never knew any thing but that they were handſome.

Let me therefore earneſtly beg of all my fair readers, to endeavour to have an amiable merit, by joining the graces to the virtues; for a valuable woman exerts the manly virtues of friendſhip, probity, and honour, by the punctual diſcharge of all her obligations: I do not confine the merit of women; no; I give them a much larger extent than they generally give themſelves; for I would have my fair countrywomen not only to have the exterior graces, but all the virtues of the heart, and all the fine ſentiments that their minds are capable of receiving by acquiring a ſolid merit;

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I would have them conſider themſelves as an additional part of the human ſpecies; and this would direct their ambition to excel to the right place; for they would then in no part of their lives want opportunities of being ſhining ornaments to their fathers, their huſbands, their brothers, or their own children.

But I beg pardon of thoſe of my fair readers who diſlike this digreſſion, perhaps both for the length and the ſubject: all that I preſume to offer in my own defence is, that I have treated them like a true friend; for I have ventured to diſoblige them for their own good.

But I now return to my hiſtory; and am to acquaint my readers, that Portia and Cornelia were to have gone out of town with Hortenſius and his lady; but Portia had ſome unexpected buſineſs that called for her immediate attendance; they were therefore obliged to defer their journey for a fortnight, and then purpoſed following Hortenſius and Arſpacia, and intended ſtaying with them four or five months. Hortenſius and his lady had now been gone ten days, and Portia had not heard from them, which gave both her and Cornelia great anxiety; Portia therefore deſired Cornelia to write to Arſpacia that poſt, and to inform her, that

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in three days they intended to ſet out for Hortenſius's ſeat: this command ſhe joyfully obeyed; and, as the morning was fine, Portia purpoſed taking a walk till dinner-time: as Portia's coach drove on, Cornelia obſerved to her the vaſt numbers of poor that crouded the ſtreets; and ſaid, ſhe thought it a great misfortune that it was ſo very difficult to diſtinguiſh the real objects from the counterfeit; to which Portia anſwered, her obſervation was juſt; for it was almoſt impoſſible to make that very neceſſary diſtinction; and yet, ſaid ſhe, it is the ſafer way of the two to be impoſed on, than to overlook one real object: this great fault, continued Portia, is wholly owing to the careleſsneſs of our legiſlators, whoſe buſineſs it is to puniſh counterfeits, and juſtly to apply the large ſums of money gathered for the relief of worthy objects: but, continued Portia, it gives me a real pleaſure to ſee that tenderneſs of diſpoſition in you, Cornelia; for compaſſion towards the diſtreſſed is a moſt amiable quality: I wiſh, ſaid ſhe, that all perſons of fortune would retrench a little from their unneceſſary expences, I mean thoſe only, ſaid Portia, which come under the article of pleaſure, that they might be the better enabled to afford ſuch as charity engages all people to; ſurely humanity

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makes us feel the neceſſity of aſſiſting our fellow-creatures; and good-natured generous tempers are more ſenſible of the obligations that lie upon them to do good, than they are of all the other neceſſities of life: your natural diſpoſition, Cornelia, continued Portia, inclines me to believe you will, when you are at the head of a family, treat your ſervants with kindneſs and humanity: the impatience and heat of youth, joined to the falſe notions that they have imbibed of themſelves, makes ſome ladies look upon their ſervants as creatures of a different ſpecies; but I am very certain I have no occaſion to tell you, that this is contrary to the ſentiments you owe yourſelf, and to the humanity you owe to all the world: we ought indeed to conſider our ſervants as unhappy friends; for the vaſt difference between us and them is not their fault, nor our merits, but a particular direction of the divine providence; therefore never make them uneaſy in their ſtate of life, nor add weight to the trouble of it, there is nothing ſo poor and mean as to be proud and haughty to any body in your ſervice: never uſe any harſh language to them; indeed it ought not to come out of the mouth of a well-bred, polite woman: as ſervitude is ſettled in oppoſition to the natural equality of mankind,

it

it becomes us to ſoften it: never be in a paſſion with your ſervants; for by doing this you expoſe yourſelf to them; and leſſen your right of reprimanding them, by letting them ſee your faults: you muſt keep up an authority in your family; but it ſhould be a mild authority: you ſhould not always threaten without puniſhing, for fear of bringing your threats into contempt; but yet even this ſhould not be done till perſuaſion has failed; for you muſt always remember, that humanity and chriſtianity put all the world on the ſame foot, and you owe them aſſiſtance, advice, and bounties ſuitable to their condition and wants: never encourage the flattery of your ſervants; and, to prevent any impreſſion of this kind, conſider you pay theſe people to ſerve your weakneſs and your pride. By the time this converſation was finiſhed, Portia and Cornelia were got to the park, and were met by three young ladies of Cornelia's acquaintance, who aſked her to be of their party that night to the opera: to this queſtion Cornelia very politely anſwered in the negative; they then ſaid, with a loud laugh, that ſhe was a ſtupid creature, that could reſiſt ſuch an enchanting entertainment; for their own parts, they had not miſſed going to the opera a ſingle night all the ſeaſon;

ſeaſon; and yet they could not recollect they had ſeen Cornelia there more than twice: Cornelia ſaid, this was very true; and, what would more ſurprize them, ſhe would inform them, that ſhe was juſt going out of town: at this they all ſtarted, ſhrugged up their ſhoulders, and ſaid, if ſhe was ſerious, they pitied her; for their own parts, they could not breathe in the country ſo early in the year; when the town was empty indeed, it was changing the ſcene, and ſo was tolerable for a very little while; but, if ſhe muſt go, begged ſhe would take a large quantity of hartſhorn with her; for they were very ſure ſhe would want it, as they knew by experience, that every body muſt be very ill if they were alone; after this good-natured advice, they very obligingly took their leaves: Portia then ſaid, ſhe believed theſe ladies would not make very valuable wives; but indeed no ſenſible man would ever put them to the trial: it appears to me, continued Portia, that theſe ladies have miſtaken their intereſt; for, by ſo conſtantly being in publick, they will wear out the taſte of the town by ſhewing themſelves continually; and as there is one among them that ſeems to want graces to ſet her off to advantage, I think, ſaid ſhe, ſhe ought to be more reſerved; there is no honour or

dignity,

dignity, Cornelia, I aſſure you, in a woman's ſhewing herſelf continually; nor is it an eaſy matter to preſerve a ſtrict modeſty in a conſtant hurry of diverſions; beſides, the uſe leſſens the reliſh of them; if you would have your pleaſures and amuſements laſt, uſe them only as diverſions to relieve you after more ſerious occupations; entertain yourſelf often with your own reaſon and reflections, and the abſence of pleaſures will not leave you any time upon your hands, nor any deſires after them: theſe ladies carried their raillery a great way; but expoſed only themſelves; for, as the inimitable doctor Young ſays,

O! loſt to virtue, loſt to manly thought,
Loſt to the noble ſallies of the ſoul,
Who think it ſolitude to be alone.

A life of levity, my dear Cornelia, is a life of guilt; a ſerious mind is the native ſoil of every virtue, and the ſingle character that does true honour to human nature: your acquaintance are in the wrong, that reproach you with being too fond of ſolitude; for it is abſolutely neceſſary, to weaken the impreſſion that ſenſible objects are apt to make upon a young mind: be aſſured, from my experience, that the greateſt ſcience is to know how to be independent; ſecure yourſelf therefore a place

of

of refuge in your own breaſt; you can always return thither, and are ſure of being welcome; but when you do not, by ſome ſolid reflections, place your dependance on yourſelf, you muſt be unhappy; you will find the ſenſe of all pleaſures wear off as ſoon as you grow habituated to them; and you will likewiſe find, that when the world is not neceſſary to your happineſs, that it will have no power over you: a wiſe woman never runs after felicity, but makes her own happineſs; for it is always in her own power: lay down this for a maxim, with a reſolution to determine your conduct by, that true happineſs conſiſts in peace of mind, in the uſe of your reaſon, and in the diſcharge of your ſeveral duties; never therefore fancy yourſelf happy, till you feel your pleaſures of this ſort flow from the bottom of your heart.

Here Portia ended; and, as it grew late, they haſtened to her coach to return home; when they arrived there, they found a meſſenger waiting from Arſpacia, who had come poſt to acquaint them, that two days after Hortenſius had got into the country, as he was riding, his horſe took fright, had thrown his maſter, and had broke his leg in two places, the agony of which had thrown Hortenſius into a violent fever, and that he feared there were ſmall hopes

of

of his maſter's life; that his lady was in the utmoſt affliction, and begged Portia and Cornelia to come to her as ſoon as poſſible.

Portia immediately ordered her equipage to be got ready; and, after taking a ſlight refreſhment, herſelf and Cornelia ſet out in the afternoon of the ſame day for Hortenſius's ſeat; but diſpatched a ſervant before them to acquaint Arſpacia with their coming: they travelled with all the expedition in their power, yet could not arrive there till the morning of the third day after they had left London: they found the whole family in the utmoſt affliction; for Hortenſius had expired about two hours before they got there: the ſurgeons, it ſeems, at firſt feared a mortification; and though nothing was omitted that could poſſibly prevent it, yet the fourth day it took place, and proved fatal to him. He was univerſally lamented; for no man could be more beloved, and truly eſteemed by all that knew him: his eſtate, which was very large, was entailed; and, as he had no ſon, went to the heir at law; but Arſpacia had a jointure of it, of fifteen hundred pounds a year: his will had been made ſome time; and Arſpacia was left ſole executrix, and guardian to their only daughter, who had a fortune of thirty thouſand pounds.

It

It would make too melancholy an impreſſion on my readers, where I to attempt to deſcribe the ſcenes they beheld in this family; but Portia and Cornelia haſtened to Arſpacia's room, they found her confined to her bed with a fever, contracted by the fatigue of body and anxiety of mind ſhe had undergone upon Hortenſius's account.

The young and innocent Clelia was playing by the bed-ſide, quite inſenſible of the irreparable loſs ſhe had ſuſtained, and happy indeed in that inſenſibility; and even the ſight of this much beloved infant now increaſed poor Arſpacia's affliction, ſo that Portia ordered her to be removed.

Arſpacia was truly an object of pity, for ſhe was the picture of human woe; how was her mind tortured with the abſence of what it loved, and now it was for ever loſt to her; what excurſions did her ſoul make in imagination after it, and then turn into itſelf again, more fooliſhly fond and dejected at the diſappointment. Her grief, inſtead of having recourſe to reaſon, which would reſtrain it, ſeemed only to ſearch for further nouriſhment; it called upon memory to repreſent the voice, the words, the looks, the temper, and affection of the deceaſed Hortenſius.

The ſight of the miſerable Arſpacia, brought to Cornelia's mind theſe beautiful lines of Doctor Young's.

O! the ſoft commerce:—O! the tender ties,
Cloſe twiſted with the fibres of the heart;
Which, broken, break them;—and drain off the ſoul
Of human joy,—and make it pain to live,
And is it then pain to live—when ſuch friends part?
'Tis the ſurvivor dies.—My heart, no more.

Portia was certainly the propereſt perſon in the world, upon ſuch an occaſion; and ſhe exhauſted her whole ſtock of eloquence, in endeavouring to ſooth Arſpacia's mind to peace, for there was not one argument, moral, or divine, ſhe did not make uſe of. Portia ordered a bed to be put up in Arſpacia's dreſſing-room, that ſhe might night and day be always ready to aſſiſt her unhappy friend.

Portia would ſay to Arſpacia, I beg you, my much beloved friend, to moderate your grief; lay before you the wiſdom of your Maker, and the relation you ſtand in to him, the hidden ways and goodneſs of his providence, and the right which he has to impoſe

impoſe a diſcipline upon us in the way of probation; if once you do this, you will find that an immoderate ſorrow, let the loſs be what it will, how much leſs then, when it is only the common fate of all mankind; is in no ſenſe conſiſtent with your duty to God.

You ought, Arſpacia, to ſubmit to him as the wiſeſt and beſt of Beings; and abſolutely to depend upon his care and providence, as the governor of the world. This is that temper of mind which is moſt particularly ſuitable to the ſtate we are paſſing through, and there can be no love of ſuch a Being as God is without it.

We know, that we derive every thing which we enjoy in this life from his eſſential goodneſs; we know, that he has a power to do what he pleaſes; but we likewiſe know, that he is a Being of the moſt abſolute benevolence, who delights in doing good to all his creatures without exception; and what is the concluſion that is to be drawn from hence, but that we ſhould refer ourſelves entirely and implicitely to him, and place all our truſt and confidence in his goodneſs; think that you are his creature, and can claim nothing from him; and that your being is an act of his free-will and mercy; do not therefore complain of your affliction,

which

which he has ordered; dare not to find fault with his adminiſtration.

No, this is an exceſs of pride and folly, which your heart, Arſpacia, will never comply with.

Let me beſeech you, therefore, not to give yourſelf up to ſuch an extravagance of grief, which will ſhorten a life that is extremely valued by all your friends, and which will be very uſeful to your daughter, who will have many demands upon you, for the duties and ſervices you owe her as a parent.

Re-aſſume then, my dear Arſpacia, your wonted greatneſs of mind, for true piety, I aſſure you, conſiſts in ſubmitting to, and not contending againſt the will of heaven; this method will bring you preſent peace and future glory.

With ſuch converſations as theſe, Portia in ſome meaſure calmed the diſtracted boſom of the loſt, but gentle Arſpacia; alas, her delicate frame was too weak to ſupport the ſhock ſhe had received by the death of Hortenſius; not but her fever abated, and ſhe quitted her bed, but continued ſo weak and emaciated, that ſhe appeared but as the ſhade of the once ſprightly and engaging Arſpacia.

Portia found her ſtrength ſo totally decayed, that it was impoſſible to move Arſpacia

ſpacia to London; and though ſhe had two of the moſt eminent phyſicians that part of the world afforded, who had conſtantly attended her, yet Portia ſent to a great diſtance to fetch a third, who was ſaid to be the very Æſculapius of the age. After a very long conſultation, which Portia waited with the utmoſt impatience, they declared, they neither had, nor would neglect any thing, that could contribute to eſtabliſh Arſpacia's health; but ſaid it was a very dangerous caſe, and made uſe of ſo many technical terms, and talked in ſuch an unintelligible jargon, that a leſs ſagacious perſon than Portia would have been at a loſs to have known their meaning; but ſhe diſcovered, too ſoon for her peace of mind, notwithſtanding their artful diſguiſe, that it was not in the power of medicine to relieve Arſpacia, for ſhe was in, what is commonly called, a galloping conſumption. This Portia communicated to Cornelia, and the melancholy account gave her the utmoſt affliction.

Portia thought it abſolutely neceſſary to acquaint Arſpacia of her danger, which ſhe did in the ſofteſt manner imaginable; the fair mourner received this account with pleaſure, a gleam of joy ſpread it elf over her whole countenance; and ſhe ſaid,

then I ſhall ſoon be united again to my much loved Hortenſius, never more to part.

Arſpacia immediately made her will, and left the guardianſhip of her daughter Clelia to Portia; and in caſe of her death before Clelia was of age, then the whole truſt to devolve on Cornelia.

Arſpacia languiſhed on for between four or five months after this; at the end of which ſhe was made happy. Portia and Cornelia ſtayed to pay the laſt friendly offices to her memory; and then with the little Clelia all returned to London.

Portia had, for three months of the time ſhe had been in the country, an ague, which at laſt, by the uſe of proper remedies, had left her, but had impaired her health ſo much, that ſhe continued ill all the winter; and as the ſpring advanced, ſhe apparently grew worſe.

This greatly alarmed Cornelia; and upon her aſking Portia's phyſician his opinion, he ſaid, he feared there was ſmall hopes of her life; for it was, though a gradual, yet he believed a total decay of nature.

Portia made no complaints, but ſuffered pain and ſickneſs, with a fortitude that amazed Cornelia; but ſeeing Cornelia at laſt miſerable and dejected beyond expreſſion,

ſion, for ſhe could not diſguiſe her grief ſo effectuaally from the penetrating eyes of Portia, but ſhe diſcovered the real cauſe.

Portia then exhorted Cornelia in the ſtrongeſt terms to reſign her like a true chriſtian philoſopher, who had wiſely conſidered, that all our enjoyments upon earth are but of ſhort duration, telling her at the ſame time, that ſhe hoped it would alleviate her affliction, to hear ſhe could with pleaſure look back on all the paſt actions of her life, and in the review find no gloomy ideas to darken the proſpect of futurity.

Aſſuring Cornelia, her ſteady ſoul could meet the king of terrors with much more eaſe, than ſee her thus overwhelmed with grief; ſhe then moſt earneſtly conjured Cornelia to help her to ſupport a final ſeparation; for Portia, ſaid ſhe, had indeed moſt tenderly loved her.

Adding, I leave you the young Clelia, who now demands the care of a wiſe and indulgent friend, to lead her into the rugged paths of virtue, and form her infant mind to ſeek true happineſs, and this I doubt not ſhe will find in you; ſoon after uttering theſe words, ſhe gently left the world, as if ſoft ſleep had only cloſed her eyes; for as Dr. Young obſerves,

Whatever farce the boaſtful hero plays,
Virtue alone has majeſty in death;
His God ſuſtains him in his final hour.
His final hour brings glory to his God;
Man's glory, heaven vouchſafes to call
her own.
We gaze, we weep, mix'd tears of grief
and joy;
Amazement ſtrikes;—devotion burſts to
flame;
Chriſtians adore;—and infidels believe.

But there is no deſcribing the ſorrow of Cornelia's almoſt broken heart upon this occaſion; her ſituation was like Telemachus's when he had loſt Mentor, for ſhe was deprived both of the deareſt and moſt valuable friend ſhe had in the world; in Portia, Cornelia had found a treaſure of true wiſdom; and her excellent example and precepts had inſpired her with a love of virtue, ſo that to Portia, Cornelia was indebted for every advantage ſhe enjoyed, and ſhe now had loſt that much loved friend.

Her grief and affliction was exceſſive; Portia had left her her whole fortune it was true, but Cornelia had loſt that balſam of life, a virtuous friend; and it is but too certain, that thoſe agonies that have once invaded the mind, are very hard to be

be eraſed, and leave a heavy languor on the ſpirits. This was Cornelia's caſe for a long time; the reaſon I take to be this; that as the body is only endued with ſenſative faculties, it can ſuffer no longer than it feels; but the mind, of which memory is a part, cannot be wholly at reſt, till reaſon, which, though ſlow, is always ſure in its operations, exerts its power to chace all dark ideas thence; but when we have once got the better of that melancholy, which paſt ills have left behind, and grow thankful for recovered peace; we then are doubly happy, and enjoy the bleſſings with a much higher reliſh; for we then look back with pleaſure on the tempeſts we have eſcaped, and can reflect with calmneſs on a ſhipwrecked ſituation.

We then indeed begin to conſider human life, as an uncertain ocean, where numberleſs nameleſs dangers wait beneath the faireſt ſurface; and are therefore, in ſome meaſure, prepared to meet diſagreeable events.

The education of her beauteous orphan now began to engroſs all Cornelia's thoughts; ſhe endeavoured to inſtil into her tender mind, all the precepts and inſtructions that ſhe herſelf had received from the moſt excellent Portia.

Clelia was bleſſed with an uncommon ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, and great docility, which is very neceſſary for a young perſon, who ought not to have much confidence in herſelf; Cornelia never truſted her from under her own eye, but was always preſent when ſhe received her inſtructions from her ſeveral maſters; ſhe learned enough of grammar to enable her to ſpeak, write, and read her mother tongue very correctly; and ſhe is a moſt excellent accomptant, which is a part of education generally neglected in women, though nothing is more uſeful in every ſtation of life; ſhe is a perfect miſtreſs of the French language, and ſhe both draws and paints in water-colours extremely well; ſhe dances very genteely; is quite eaſy and diſengaged in her addreſs, which is perfectly polite; ſhe never ſeemed to like muſic, which Cornelia was not ſorry for, as it gave her an opportunity of employing her time to more advantage, in more uſeful ſciences. The cultivation of her mind has been Cornelia's chief concern; and as ſhe has a moſt excellent underſtanding, ſo ſhe has omitted nothing in her power to improve it.

In her perſon, Clelia is tall, very well ſhaped, and moſt exactly genteel; has very fine blue eyes, good teeth, fair hair,

hair, and a blooming complexion; in ſhort, ſhe doth not want graces to render her extremely agreeable; but ſhe is not a beauty, except that her not knowing, or thinking herſelf handſome, may render her ſo in the eyes of the judicious.

The ſeaſon of the year now approaching, when nature adorns all the earth in her gayeſt colours, Cornelia, with the young Clelia, quitted the noiſy, duſty town, for freſh air and retirement.

Cornelia took a houſe at about a day's journey from London, in a moſt beautiful village; the lord of the manor, and indeed, the perſon from whom ſhe rented her houſe, I ſhall call Atticus; he was, at the time Cornelia took the houſe, abroad, and had been ſo for ſeven years; making, as it is called, the grand tour. He returned to England a few months after Cornelia came to reſide in the country, and very politely made her a viſit.

I believe it will be neceſſary here to give an account of this gentleman; his age was about thirty, with a clear eſtate of three thouſand pounds a year, and an unexceptionable character; as to his perſon, if the picture I ſhall give my readers falls ſhort of their expectation, they muſt impute its faults to the unſkilful hand that draws it; for I aſſure them, there was

none in the original. Suppoſe Atticus then introduced by the Graces, after they had adorned this their favourite in the moſt elegant manner, for nothing was wanting, that could poſſibly add a magnificence of dreſs, to the dignity of his air; not that I would have my readers imagine from hence that he had the leaſt tincture of the Engliſh coxcomb, or French petite maitre; no, that was not the caſe, but I would only convey to them an idea, that Atticus appeared as a man of the firſt faſhion.

He is of the middle ſize, and finely made, with a face ſo agreeable, that I may affirm, nature deſigned him to pleaſe; but this is nothing to the eaſe and genteelneſs which appears to heighten every thing about him, both in perſon and addreſs; Atticus ſoon convinced Cornelia, he had a very fine underſtanding, and that nothing had been neglected that could improve it; and to this he joined a politeneſs very ſeldom to be met with.

Cornelia now believes, that Atticus ſoon found her heart was not to be trifled into love, nay, perhaps, he diſcovered this the very firſt viſit he made her; and as he was thoroughly acquainted with our ſex, he immediately formed a plan, which he moſt ſteadily purſued; his method was very

very different from what is generally practiced; but he thought it muſt be ſucceſsful from the natural gravity of Cornelia's diſpoſition.

It was this; he endeavoured with all his art, for two whole years, to gain Cornelia's eſteem, and to lay hold of every opportunity to give her proofs of his; but he never once, in all that time, ſaid a fine thing of her perſon; though all his converſation tended to gain her good opinion: Atticus's ſcheme was ſucceſsful; for eſteem is the reſult of reaſon, and to deſerve it from good ſenſe the height of human glory.

And I believe a ſenſible woman had rather a man of honour payed her that than all the homage of a ſincere and humble love; for love often kindles from external merit only; but eſteem ariſes from a much higher Source, the merit of the Soul.

Cornelia's aſtoniſhment was great, when Atticus declared himſelf her lover: ſhe was pleaſed when ſhe thought him her friend; but imagined that ſhe had been determined never to enter into a ſtate of life, where the very deſerving Portia had met with ſuch ill treatment; but, alas, how vain are the reſolutions of a woman, who has once taught her heart to be pleaſed with a man of merit. Cornelia often raiſed

objections; and expreſſed her fears of being unhappy, and meeting with a Careleſs in Atticus; to all which he would anſwer in the words of a late ingenious author.

Our growing days increaſe of joy ſhall know,
And thick-ſown comforts leave no room for woe;
Thou ſhalt ſtrow ſweets to ſoften life's rough way;
And when hot paſſions my proud wiſhes ſway,
Thou, like ſome breeze, ſhall in my boſom play:
Thou, for protection, ſhall on me depend,
And I on thee for a ſoft faithful friend:
I, in Cornelia, ſhall for ever view
At once my care, my fear, my comfort too;
Thou ſhalt firſt partner in my pleaſures be,
But all my pains ſhall laſt be known to thee.

But not to tire my readers; Atticus uſed his eloquence ſo effectually, and ſo thoroughly ſatisfied Cornelia of his generous ſentiments, that at laſt ſhe reſigned her liberty; he now aſſures her, that he is convinced of her prudence, and he relies entirely upon her conduct, and likewiſe, with great politeneſs, tells her, that by it he in a great meaſure regulates his own; ſo that each circling now adds to their bliſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A character drawn by Clelia, with a deſcription of Atticus's houſe, gardens, and manner of life; the character of Cleander; the concluſion of the whole.

BUT it is time now to return to the blooming Clelia: ſhe was a child when Cornelia married, and, by the uncommon ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition, has engaged the affection of Atticus ſo much, that he now is as fond of her as if ſhe was his own daughter; for that is a bleſſing denied him, Cornelia having no children: Clelia reverences Atticus with a kind of filial piety, and pays him all the regard that a well-diſpoſed and grateful heart knows is always due to an indulgent parent.

This ſituation of two people ſo very deſervedly dear to Cornelia, doth not a little contribute to her happineſs. There is a young gentleman, whom I ſhall call Cleander, who often comes to Atticus's villa to ſpend a few days: his father has been dead ſome years, but was an intimate friend of Atticus's: he has occaſionally made theſe viſits ever ſince Atticus returned from Italy; but of late they have been more frequent, which made Atticus ob-

ſerve to Cornelia, that he believed theſe viſits were to be placed to Clelia; though at this time Clelia was ignorant of any ſuch deſign; but, as I have given my readers a deſcription of the perſon of this beauteous maid, I think I ought in juſtice to be as particular in the more valuable part, her mind; and here indeed it is that Clelia ſhines; for the qualities of the heart are of the greateſt concern in the commerce of life, as the underſtanding does not endear us to others; for we frequently ſee people very odious with great parts; they will give you a good opinion of themſelves, though perhaps it is done by depreſſing you: this is no part of Clelia's character; for ſhe is the joy of all her acquaintance, who are never ſo happy, as when they can get her to their houſes to ſpend a few days; for ſhe is always innocently chearful.

A lady, whom I ſhall call Amelia, aſked this favour of Cornelia the other day; and as Cornelia knew her to have an excellent good heart, joined to a great ſhare of good ſenſe, ſhe conſented, upon condition, that the whole time was not ſpent in pleaſure and diſſipation, but ſome hours aſſigned every day for reading and reflexion; and this ſhe did, knowing there were ſome ladies at that time in the family, who were, as the poet ſays,

Idly

Idly buſy, to no end employed.

Clelia is ſenſible that Cornelia has the higheſt and moſt tender regard for her; and ſhe therefore conſtantly pays her the ſame duty that would have been due to the much-lamented Arſpacia: Clelia is now juſt eighteen; and though no perſon has more the appearance of a woman of the firſt faſhion than herſelf, yet her Sentiments of a fine lady's true character differ very widely from the generality of the world. When Clelia had left Cornelia ſix days, though her abſence in all was not to exceed a fortnight, ſhe wrote the following letter to her, and incloſed the character, and by that means let her know how ſhe diſpoſed of her time in a morning: and as it is ſaid by the wiſe and learned, that people's private letters are the trueſt pictures of their minds, I ſhall therefore give Clelia's letter; and only make this one remark, that a young lady that thinks in the manner that Clelia does can hardly act wrong.

" Honoured Madam,

" IN a late converſation I had with " you, we both joined in condemning " the manners of the women of the preſent " age;

" age; where the foundation of the fault " lies, or how to be amended, I do not " take upon me to determine; only this " I humbly offer, that if the ladies would " be prevailed with to take their models " more from antiquity, they would be leſs " liable to err; and this we ought not to " deſpair of, as antiques happen now to " be the faſhion; upon this preſumption, " Madam, I have taken leave to preſent " you with an eaſtern lady; her habits, it " is true, are not modern, but are ex- " tremely becoming; and her ornaments, " though perhaps not in taſte, as the " phraſe now it, are, notwithſtanding " that, very valuable; and, as ſhe is a " foreigner, I have all the reaſon in the " world to believe ſhe will be well re- " ceived: if, Madam, you ſhew the in- " cloſed to Atticus, he will immediately " find a great likeneſs between this foreign " lady, and a woman that he prefers to " all the world; though ſhe herſelf will " be the laſt perſon that ſees the reſem- " blance.

" You, Madam, that are ſo converſant " in holy writ, will, at the firſt view diſ- " cover my theft, and, I doubt not, will " approve my choice, as I am very ſenſi- " ble, that you look upon the Old and New " Teſtament be be the moſt valuable trea- " ſure you poſſeſs. " My

" My reaſon for fixing on the proverbs " of Solomon, to take my character of a " true kind lady from is, that no man " ever knew our ſex ſo thoroughly as he " did, as no man ever had had ſo many " hundred wives as his majeſty, and con- " ſequently could not have ſo many op- " portunities of diſcerning the ſeveral foi- " bles, follies, and weakneſſes of the " ladies as himſelf; to ſay nothing of his " ſuperior wiſdom to all the reſt of man- " kind, as perhaps that would not be ad- " mitted, I knowing ſeveral people who " think themſelves much wiſer than So- " lomon.

" My attempting to draw this character " is the ſtrongeſt proof I can give you, " Madam, that I do not neglect the com- " mands you honoured me with when I " left you.

" But there is nothing more mortify- " ing, than to write upon ſubjects that " put me in mind of all my faults; and " I now earneſtly intreat you, Madam, " that if you ſee any vices in me, incon- " ſiſtent with the virtues that I recommend, " you will put me in a way to eradicate " them; perhaps I have furniſhed you " with arms againſt myſelf; uſe them " freely, Madam, I beſeech you; for I am " very ſenſible, that you can teach me how

" to ſubdue every unruly paſſion, as the
" authority of your advice and precepts
" is always ſupported by your own great
" example.

" Theſe few reflections will, I hope,
" be freſh engagements to me to exert
" myſelf in the way of virtue; I fortify
" my reaſon even againſt myſelf; for I
" am now under a neceſſity of following
" it, or elſe I expoſe myſelf to the ſhame
" of having known it, and yet been falſe
" to it: I do not forget a precept of yours,
" Madam, which is, that other peoples
" faults do not leſſen ours, but ought
" to ſerve as examples to deter us from
" them; I therefore flatter myſelf, that
" the force of faſhion will have no influ-
" ence on my conduct, as I ſhall never
" chuſe to be good and virtuous only by
" compariſon. Your great indulgence to
" me all my life has encouraged me to
" ſend you the few obſervations I encloſe,
" believing they will be received by
" you, with that condeſcending goodneſs
" you practice to all people whoſe hearts
" are good, though their heads are weak;
" and I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your moſt obliged friend, and
Faithful humble ſervant,

CLELIA."

A cha-

A character of a perfect good * woman, and conſequently a very fine lady, taken from the proverbs of king Solomon.

The Character.

THOUGH this lady's form is majeſtick, yet her aſpect is humble; ſhe has gentle ſoftneſs and tender fear; kinkneſs is all the art ſhe uſes, and innate purity all her rouge.

Her looks, her voice, her geſture, and whole behaviour is truly feminine.

She ſpends a great deal of her time in the adoration of the ſupreme being; a goodneſs, mixed with fear of offending, therefore gives a tincture to her whole behaviour.

Religion in her is a principle of reaſon enlivened with hope; it is an uniform and conſiſtent tenor of action; it is ſtrict without ſeverity, compaſſionate without weakneſs; it is the perfection of that juſt behaviour that proceeds from the underſtanding, it is not the effect of an eaſy conſtitution.

Happy is the man who chearful Hymen has united to her; he has nothing to fear but to loſe her, and ſurvive her: for

* In the eaſtern language, good and great are ſynonimous terms.

his

his heart repoſes itſelf upon her prudence, and finds itſelf refreſhed, as a traveller's, fainting under the ſun's ſultry rays, repoſes himſelf upon the tender graſs beneath a ſhady tree: where ſhe opens her mouth, ſoft perſuaſion and genuine graces flow from her lips; in her heart is wiſdom, and in her tongue the law of kindneſs: her huſband is diſtinguiſhed for the choice he has made; for her price is far above rubies; ſhe will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life; ſhe ſtretcheth out her hands to the poor, yea ſhe reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

Her body, any more than her mind, is never trimmed and decked with the vain, gawdy ornaments of the age; her fancy, though full of life, is always reſtrained by her diſcretion; but ſhe never appears without good ſenſe, rational piety, modeſt hope, and chearful reſignation; ſtrength and honour are her clothing, and ſhe ſhall rejoice in time to come.

Her greateſt pleaſure is the improvements of her childrens minds, and the good order of her houſhold is her greateſt glory, which adds a luſtre to her native beauty; her children ariſe up, and call her bleſſed; her huſband alſo, and he praiſeth her.

Her hands deſpiſe not labour, for ſhe is ſkilled in all kinds of fine needle-work: as ſhe foreſees things at a diſtance, ſo ſhe provides againſt all contingencies; ſhe acts regularly, therefore ſhe is never in a hurry: it is true, ſhe is always employed, but never embarraſſed, becauſe ſhe does every thing in its proper time; though the care of the houſehold is her's, and ſhe is charged with the burden of reproving for what is amiſs, of refuſing and ſparing expence, things that make moſt other women diſliked, yet ſhe has acquired the love of her maidens, becauſe they find not in her either paſſion, pride, peeviſhneſs, nor ill-humour; with a glance of her eye they know her meaning, and are afraid to diſpleaſe her; the orders ſhe gives are plain, for ſhe commands nothing but what may be eaſily performed; and ſhe reproves with mildneſs; nay, even amidſt her reprehenſions, ſhe finds room to give encouragement to do better; ſhe looks well to the ways of her houſehold, and eateth not the bread of idleneſs.

Many daughters have done virtuouſly; but thou excelleſt them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that faithfully diſcharges her ſeveral duties, ſhe ſhall be praiſed.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praiſe her in the gates of the land.

This is the character Clelia aims at obtaining; and this, adorned as Clelia is, with unpremeditated graces, will, I doubt not, make her huſband always continue the fond lover. My reaſon for giving this character as Clelia ſent it is, to convince my fair readers, that it is very poſſible for a philoſophic ſoul to inhabit a beauteous form. Clelia believes, that her perſon, fortune, and youth, are no privilege againſt thought and reflection: Clelia never laughs at wiſdom; but, with attention and pleaſure, hears the gravity of its inſtruction. But, by the behaviour of the ladies of the preſent age, I am inclined to believe, that many amongſt them are entire ſtrangers to the true character of a fine lady, as no woman can come under that denomination that is not greatly good: let them behold what an amiable appearance, what a brilliant figure, a real good woman makes, who, as Pope ſays upon another occaſion,

Is beloved, obeyed, adored.

And had I referred my fair countrywomen to the Bible, from whence this character

character was taken, I am apprehenſive it would have given them a great averſion to it; though I am very certain, that if they ſtudied that valuable book more than they do, this character would not be ſo ſcarce among us.

Clelia likewiſe ſent a character of a modern fine lady, taken from a view of the town; I confeſs the portrait is very like the original; but the whole appearance of this lady is ſo odious, ſo frightfully ugly, that I believed it would be diſpleaſing to many of my fair readers to behold it.

Indeed, if a foreigner was to ſee this character, as it is too notorious to all the world that we have for a long time had very little religion left among us, he would think we were now a nation of heathens, and, like ſome of the Indians, worſhipped goddeſſes, who were evil ſpirits.

I hope my readers will pardon this digreſſion, as I promiſe not to offend in this way again; and I now return to my hiſtory, and am to acquaint them, that Atticus and Cornelia live all the year at his ſeat in the country: Atticus is crowned with true glory; he therefore looks on grandeur with contempt; removed from all the anxieties of an ambitious life, he wiſely

wiſely conſiders fortune ſells at a dear rate her favours to haſty and impatient men; ſecure of himſelf, no trifles can depreſs his ſoul, or hinder her from ſoaring above the common accidents of life; his wiſhes are now confined to a few particular friends, ſelected for their great virtues from the whole of his acquaintance, and he hopes to paſs the remainder of his days in retirement, a friend to all mankind.

For, to love the publick, to ſtudy univerſal good, and to promote the intereſt of the whole world, as far as lies in our power, is ſurely the height of human glory, as it makes that temper which we call divine.

Atticus keeps a conſtant table, and by that means avoids all expenſive entertainments: Atticus and Cornelia are never without company; for they have a very agreeable neighbourhood; and the whole county is fond of them.

Atticus's houſe is in the modern taſte, large, convenient, and quite equal to his fortune; and yet he has carefully avoided the folly or madneſs, for I know not which to call it, of the preſent age, in running out his eſtate to decorate his houſe: no; Atticus has followed Cicero's advice to his friend, where he tells him, that every wiſe owner ſhould be an ornament to his houſe, and not the houſe an ornament to the owner.

The

The gardens indeed are laid out in the moſt elegant manner imaginable; and are very large; perhaps this was an indulgence that Atticus thought was due to Cornelia, who is remarkably fond of a fine garden.

The ſituation is by nature very delightful, and through a very fine wood, which in winter is a fence from ſtormy blaſts, and in ſummer from ſcorching ſun. Atticus has opened ſeveral viſtoes to extend his proſpect; one diſcovers a ſtately palace, built for pride and luxury, which ſerves to terminate his view; a ſecond preſents a paſtoral ſcene, where innocent ſhepherds are tending their fleecing care; another ſhows a beautiful river, which in wild meanders gently ſteals through the fertile meadows; in one part of this garden there is a grotto, made in imitation of that where Calypſo detained the wiſe Ulyſſes; then by an eaſy aſſent you enter a covered walk, which leads you to a ſpacious plain; in the midſt of which there is a temple built in the Egyptian manner, and adorned with paintings by the beſt hands; from this you gradually deſcend into a wilderneſs of flowering ſhrubs, which is very large; and at laſt ends in a cave, like that renowned of old which taught wiſdom; but indeed the beauties of this garden are ſo many, and ſo various, that a more

a more particular deſcription, I fear, would only tire my readers; I ſhall haſten therefore to acquaint them, that a little while ago, as Atticus, Cornelia, and a very large party of gentlemen and ladies, were ſitting in the grotto before-mentioned, the converſation turned on the poet Milton; Cleander, who I have before named as the ſon of a particular friend of Atticus, and who is a profeſſed admirer of our Engliſh bard, quoted ſome of his lines; the book was immediately called for; and Clelia ſaid with a ſmile, ſhe would have the honour of preſenting that great man to the company, and immediately roſe up to fetch it: at her return, when ſhe was at a diſtance, one of the gentlemen ſaid, here comes Clelia, like the ever-blooming Hebe; to which Cleander anſwered in the words of an ingenious gentleman before quoted, but with the emphaſis of a lover;

Her form the beauties of her mind expreſs'd;
Her mind is beauty, by the Graces dreſs'd.

Clelia, continued Cleander,

Unknowing of her power, with artleſs
Innocence ſubdues the moſt rebellious hearts?

The

The manner of Cleander's pronouncing theſe words opened Cornelia's eyes; and the next morning he deſired a private audience of Atticus in his library, and there made a formal declaration of his paſſion for the engaging Clelia.

This excellent young man is now about twenty-eight years old, tho' he doth not appear to be more than of age. By the bounty of nature, and the advantages of a liberal education, he is now maſter of every genteel and polite accompliſhment; his perſon is juſtly proportioned, and finely turned; his ſtature is tall, his complexion fair, but healthy; his features exactly regular, his eyes hazle, expreſſing the greateſt ſweetneſs and uncommon delicacy, but without the leaſt tincture of effeminacy.

His wit is lively, chearful, innocent, complaiſant, and unaffected. His learning is univerſal, deep, and uſeful; his temper is open, ſincere, humane, benificent, placid, and affectionate. He is virtuous by inclination, for all his paſſions obey his reaſon, and are conducted by the ſtricteſt rules of honour and diſcretion.

Cleander's father was the younger brother of a baronet, of an ancient family.

The baronet had a clear eſtate of four thouſand pounds per annum, but Cleander's father had only a younger child's fortune, which was fifteen thouſand pounds; he was brought up a merchant, and had only one ſon, this Cleander I now mention, and a daughter. As this gentleman was very ſucceſsful in trade, and found Cleander was a youth of a promiſing genius, ſo he gave him a very liberal education; and when Cleander left the univerſity, his father, upon a calculation of his affairs, believing himſelf to be worth an hundred thouſand pounds, ſent Cleander to travel under the care and inſpection of a truly worthy man, who was not only a very learned and pious divine, but in every reſpect a finiſhed fine gentleman. Under this great man, Cleander received all the improvement that his friends could wiſh, or indeed, that a natural fine underſtanding could make; and having finiſhed his travels, Cleander was now upon his return to England, when he received an account, that his father had had ſome very great and unforeſeen loſſes in trade; and as he intended to carry on buſineſs no longer than his ſon Cleander returned home, ſo he had been calling in his money and ſeveral debts, in order to

ſettle

ſettle his affairs; and that two of his correſpondents were gone off with very large ſums of his money in their hands. This was a blow few young men could have received in the manner that Cleander did; the only effect it ſeemed to have upon him was, to make him impatient to offer his father all the conſolation in his power; but alas, this was denied him, for the good old man, unable to bear this ſtroke of fortune, had cloſed his eyes for ever before his ſon Cleander could arrive.

But he had the happineſs to afford his mother great conſolation, for he was to her at once both the indulgent huſband, and the moſt dutiful ſon; as ſhe was a perfect good woman, ſo he was ſtudious to prevent all her wiſhes, for he was no ſtranger to her great merit; and Cleander's chief ambition ſeemed to be in rendering to her every kind office that could poſſibly make her life eaſy and agreeable: ſhe ſurvived his father about three years; and if the bleſſing of a mother can in this licentious age be thought of any efficacy, Cleander now enjoys it to the full; as to his ſiſter, who inherited all the ſhining virtues of his family, and to whom Cleander had been a parent in the trueſt ſenſe, fate deprived him of her juſt as ſhe

was upon the point of marriage to a very worthy man, and to whom Cleander had moſt generouſly engaged to give a handſome fortune out of his own acquiſition.

For Cleander, as I have before obſerved, was left young entirely to his own management, and upon a nice inſpection into his affairs, he found, that out of his father's once large fortune, there did not now remain much above ſix hundred pounds a year; this was too little for his great ſoul, who reflected he had a mother and a ſiſter, who very juſtly called on him for aſſiſtance; and who till now had paſſed their lives in affluence and eaſe, and were therefore to him meritorious objects of compaſſion.

Beſides all this, he did not think if he had enjoyed the whole of this little eſtate, that it was ſufficient to ſupport him in idleneſs and pleaſure; he therefore immediately applied himſelf to buſineſs with the utmoſt induſtry; and by merchandize, he in a few years made his fortune double; for Cleander has held in the utmoſt ſcorn and deteſtation all thoſe little arts in trade which too many people practice. He is by this means every where admired, as every body chuſes to deal with a man of his integrity. His trade, when he quitted buſineſs,

buſineſs, was become ſo extended, that in a few years he muſt have acquired an immenſe fortune. Thus have we ſeen this young man thrown from the heighth of proſperity, though in the heyday of his blood, as Shakeſpear has it, yet always equal to himſelf; for not a murmur, a ſingle complaint againſt providence ever eſcaped his lips: educated to enjoy a fortune; but under a neceſſity to raiſe one; which makes me ſay, with my favourite poet,

Teach me, like thee, in various nature wiſe,
To fall with dignity, with temper riſe;
Form'd by thy converſe happily to ſteer,
From grave to gay, from lively to ſevere;
Correct with ſpirit, eloquent with eaſe,
Intent to reaſon, or polite to pleaſe.

But I muſt now return to the baronet I before mentioned, uncle to Cleander: this gentleman was a compleat miſer; he never married for fear of expence, and lived in a little lodging with one ſervant, whom he almoſt ſtarved as well as himſelf; the profits of his eſtate he continually laid out in purchaſing more land; ſo that, for ſome time before his death, his paternal eſtate was increaſed to upwards of ſeven thouſand pounds a year, and he ſpent not quite one hundred; he dared not make his

will, becauſe it would put him in mind he muſt one day leave his dearly beloved pelf: this miſerable being was now defuncted, and the title and eſtate was deſcended to Cleander; he only ſtayed to take poſſeſſion, and beſpeak his mourning; and then came poſt to Atticus's villa; but he did not acquaint him, Cornelia, nor Clelia, with this fortunate turn in his affairs till the morning that I have before mentioned, when he begged to know of Atticus and Cornelia if he might be permitted to make his addreſſes to the lovely maid; he ſaid, he now came to lay his life and fortune at her feet, and ſhould be compleatly happy if his paſſion met with their approbation; for though he long had loved her to exceſs, he never had preſumed to diſcloſe it to her, nor ſhould not, even now, let the conſequence to himſelf be what it would, if they diſapproved of it; but my readers will believe this was too advantageous an offer for Clelia, to be refuſed by Atticus and Cornelia; and Cleander is now, with their approbation, endeavouring to make his addreſſes and himſelf agreeable to Clelia.

And as ſhe has been long ſenſible of his uncommon merit, ſo that, with a woman of her way of thinking, will have

have great weight; and I doubt not but in a little time we ſhall ſee Cleander compleatly bleſſed with his much admired and truly deſerving Clelia.

I think I have nothing now to do, but once more to aſk pardon of the publick, for preſuming to lay ſo triffing a work before them; all I have to offer in my own defence is the goodneſs of my intention: it is true, I have told my fair countrywomen ſome diſagreeable truths; but then I have, like a ſkilful phyſician, endeavoured to make the medicine as palatable as poſſible; and it would be injuring my fair countrywomen, not to believe that they will be my advocates, from a principle of gratitude, for bringing them acquainted with the amiable Portia, who was poſſeſſed of the whole ſecret of the grand coſmetick, or a ſyſtem of true beauty; and indeed, my chief deſign, in publiſhing theſe ſheets, is to inſpire an emulation into my fair readers to imitate Portia's character, which I once more aſſure them is taken from real life.

But, if I ſhould be ſo very unfortunate to have the town behold this firſt Eſſay of my genius with unfavourable eyes, I promiſe never more to be troubleſome, as I have always been of the opinion, that, in works

works of this kind, the author is too near himſelf to judge impartially; ſelf-love quite blinds us; and to ſee our faults in the right light, we muſt view them with the ſame eyes that we do other peoples.

But if, on the contrary, the good-nature of my readers ſhould incline them to candour and indulgence, it would then be an encouragement for Cornelia to preſent them with the hiſtory of Cleander and the blooming Clelia.

FINIS.